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THE MASTER OF MARY OF BURGUNDY: MADONNA AND CHILD.
From the Prayer-Book of Charles the Bold of Burgundy: Vienna Library.
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[*Frontispiece.*

The Gothick North

A Study of Mediaeval Life, Art, and Thought

* * *

The Fair-Haired Victory

by

Sacheverell Sitwell

Duckworth

3 Henrietta Street, London

1930

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I

MONASTERIES

TWO things that happened long ago much impressed me and directed my thoughts. When I was a child, I saw a hermit in the streets and churches of Genoa. He had come down from the mountains for the Easter services in the town. His long raven-black hair nearly hid his face, though it was possible to see two flashing and fanatical black eyes through that strange kind of mask. He was a young man; I wondered if he ever saw or heard from his relatives, and if he ever read a newspaper; sometimes, now, I wonder whether he was conscripted in the war.

My other inspiration was a mendicant friar, dwarfish, red-bearded, and hunchbacked, whom I saw creeping in and out of the lava-built slums of Catania. I expect he was selling amulets. He was the most primitive human "throwback" that I have yet come across, while I must admit that his presence in Sicily was not to be wondered at, for this island, of all Western European lands, possesses the most tattered and aboriginal of monks.

Some day I shall write a history and a handbook to beggars. These lines of this present book may be said to act, in part, as a spiritual introduction to that future work, for there is no doubt that, the lunatic asylum always excepted, we can study early man to better

advantage among beggars and monks than anywhere else. The most powerful actors I have ever seen play all day for a few coppers in the slums of Naples, and their art is nearly approached in such unlikely settings as Rouen or Nancy. But before I desert my twin-theme for the remainder, at any rate, of this present book, I will draw a little sketch that can hang safely beside the two monkish incidents just noted.

In the spring of three years ago I was on the road between Leon and Oviedo in the north of Spain. These two towns are separated by a jagged and appalling range of hills in which there are many coal-mines. The colliery villages put to shame even the most disgraceful of those to be seen in Scotland, while there is not a football-match or a picture-house within miles. Upon this icy road, for at the summit there was a good deal of snow upon the ground, I passed three beggars. They were fit companions to the hermit and the Capuchin I have described. I stopped the night at Oviedo, and on my way back to Leon the following day came across them again, only about four or five miles further advanced upon their road. They were two old men and an old woman. At this second view of them the woman and one of the men were a mile behind the other man. Was he the vanguard of this extraordinary march ? Why had his two companions fallen behind ?

Their appearance was beyond description. I can only quote from a note-book some sentences which will give an idea of their effect upon the memory. "A terrible ape-like hair grows upon their lopped and twisted limbs ; they seem like an attempt at a vegetable man which has been manufactured and cast aside as soon as finished ; their piece-made limbs have been assembled

and strung together with a mechanical heartlessness of invention; their limbs are covered with coarse, spiky points like those the clown exposes when he pulls up his trouser and shows the calf of the leg sprouting with a thick noisy hair in one of the frightful demoniacal jokes of the circus; their boots, below that horror, are splayed out at their ends to show the gnarled toes that writhe convulsively, in socks that show each toe separate as would a glove! All three of them are heavily wadded in successive layers of rags, their pace is slower than that of an ox, and they lurch along under their bundles, staff in hand, with heads dropping on to their chests. On neither occasion that we saw them were they speaking. Are they two brothers and a sister? Two husbands with the same wife? Three Platonic friends? A whole history of extraordinary conjecture builds itself round them."

I wondered what language the woman spoke through those wooden and red ventriloquist cheeks; was it a few words—they surely could not have many in their language—of some incomprehensible Spanish patois; was it Basque, or Gallego, or Maragato, for this latter rare race of men, of unknown history and origin, lives not far away in the mountains near Astorga? I wondered what the name of the woman could be! She can never have been baptized, having been born probably in some ditch or beneath a stone wall's hard shade, but the two tramps must have some name to call her by, and my fancy suggested Dolores, Anita, Carmen, an echo of Andalusia into the high, cold land in which they moved. Had they any friends left, any companions who had huddled round the same embers and whom they met, now and again, upon the moors, or by a

village of caves ? Or were they simply a tribe to themselves like some of the Indians in the Mexican states who are reduced to no more than a single family ? And then I imagined a meeting with them in the night, having lost the way, and what an unearthly experience it would be to have to trust to them for a scrap of supper and for their advice upon how best to avoid the wind when lying down to sleep in their company. This was less than a year ago, and I suppose those three extraordinary beings are still wandering to and fro, having by now, it is likely enough, got deep into Galicia, the wildest and most inhospitable of lands.

It seems to me that this double encounter upon a Spanish road is in the same class of experience as the two incidents I described a little way back. There always have been, and there always will be, ascetics and beggars, and in their extremes of achievement these two strange careers come nearer to each other than might be imagined. Alas, that I must now desert the latter for the former ! But I can soften the separation by proceeding, as tramp or monk might do, down a road of common experience.

Everyone who has been in Europe knows a little hill up which there climbs a slow and steady staircase. At the top there is a great pile of buildings, and to the world of typewriter and gramophone in which we move such terraces as these are as strange as Maya temples in the jungles of Guatemala ; they are anomalous and incredible and have this advantage over any of such serpent-haunted ruins that they are often still inhabited and put to their original purposes.

A projecting porch is built forward to the edge of the hill and comes out over the steps. Through this it is

[*Photo: Alinari.*

Alessandro Magnasco. The Refectory.
Museo Civico, Bassano.

[*Facing p.* 4.

our duty to gain entry, for we have come to study and examine the honeycomb that such busy workers have built and stored for themselves. When the bell has gone back into silence a tortoise-like step comes down the long corridor and the door is unbolted and unbarred. The church lies across the flag-stones of a great court, and beyond this are the cloisters and the cells. A number of monks are crossing a corner of this courtyard into the refectory, for it is the hour and the day, coming but once in a week, upon which they eat together and are allowed to talk. We will enter and watch them.

It is a high vaulted hall, narrow and long, with great openings on either side into other refectories, as though this was nave and those were aisles. The pilasters between these arches are niched with statues of huge saints, and between their intervals there are other tables far away into the distance, while this chief hall is lined with tables that are crowded with monks. These are the oldest of them; they sit with their backs against tall wooden settees and age comes to its climax with the Prior at his high table looking down the hall. In front of him down the centre of the room is a narrow plank table at which the novices are sitting on benches without backs to them.

Several of the serving-brothers are going from table to table in pairs, carrying between them a trestle of bread; others, singly, are on their way with smoking dishes of meat, or with a water-jar in either hand. The food has not altogether gone the rounds yet; a novice is feeding a dog with a crust while he waits for his soup to arrive, another is teasing a cat with the ends of his rope waist-belt. Thus have they been painted by

Alessandro Magnasco, the delineator of monastic life, and there is another picture by him of the common room, or calefactorium, with a great open fire where the monks can be seen warming their feet and hands at the flames. It is a pity there is no picture of the frater, or dormitory, in which they slept, for we should then possess a complete epitome of their lives out of church. The painter of these two canvases added a new subject to the somewhat threadbare conventions of his age, and his pictures of monks, taken in this case from the thriving convents of the plain of Lombardy, are true even of a place so remote from his age by distance and by time as Fountains Abbey. These, then, are two general illustrations to my theme, for they give us the strange being we have come here to study in surroundings the most typical of the ordinary divergence of his life from that of soldier, sailor, shopkeeper, or peasant.

The effect of seeing so many tonsures together is, to be frank, rather repugnant—like an outbreak of ringworm in a boys' school. There are so many freakish and ugly faces, and those that are cast in a better mould seem condemned to their environment and inspire pity. Yet for many hundreds of years there was little hope for mankind outside such walls as these, and life in their shelter was the only refuge for those who were not prepared for blows with any chance person they met. The sight of this meal, taken as a whole, was not unlike that which might be witnessed during a workhouse dinner. Not much better food, still cheaper and plainer clothes, the architecture of the hall being the only main difference. So here, at any rate, the monks have still preserved their original vow of poverty, though it amounted to hardship in fine surroundings; and they

have still another freedom, that of speech. They are all busily talking to each other, which would not be true of all refectories; indeed this small licence may be said to give the clue to their identity, and we must follow it into recognition. In fact we have arrived at our list of dramatis personæ.

They would seem at first to be a drab kind of actor, very different from the spangled knights of the drama; yet, for those diamonded untruths, they may be more humble in their sackcloth, but they play in a permanent stone scene of hall and corridor, to mention but the barest of their palace cells. It has been an endless repertory for two thousand years of ritual. Their power over the audience lies in the contrasts of great riches with bare halls, wooden pillows and crusty bread with coffered ceilings and gilded walls. These terraces, leading, so they hoped, into eternal life, had, as even they would admit, various degrees, various heights and depths, and such differences we must now enumerate.

The Holy Men of Egypt were the beginning. After so many thousands of years of urban life with, at the end, the Greek and then the Roman crowd-life superimposed upon their own, it is not difficult to understand how silence and discomfort had an attraction for the serious-minded. The discontented began to rally behind certain confirmed grumblers in the desert, and with so deep a zest did they enter into this new diversion for frayed nerves that their celebrations amounted to perpetual Olympic games of privation and self-imposed torture. Over a couple of centuries the ascetics reached to superb and at the same time nauseating heights of sacrifice, and the Thebaid was big enough to raise an army. This was from an artist's point of view the

most pure and least alloyed period, and its values demand a volume to themselves.*

Asia Minor, the oldest land of luxury after Egypt, was the next to catch this infection, and the anchorites recruited from Ionia and Antioch suffered a spiritual reinforcement out of Persia and the lands beyond Tigris and Euphrates. In fact they took on many of the attributes of the Indian fakir. St. Simeon the Stylite may be remarked as a ringleader, and it is a thousand pities that I cannot describe and perhaps illustrate the masterpiece of architecture that was built round his life-long column.(1) That chapter could well continue into Byzantine history, so Oriental were those lives and that art. It might flow on, were I able to read Russian, until the death of Rasputin, but I should restrain it, save for Mount Athos, at the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders. The Jewish and the Armenian, the Arab and the Persian, entered, as I have just hinted, into that art, and indeed it is the first phase in which we find anything to do with art associated with the ascetics, who, till then, had been content with hut or cave.

There was, and there still is, but one order of monk in the Eastern church, so that there was none of the competition and the divergence of style to be found in Western Europe, where the different orders competed with each other in their monasteries.† But from this

* In the fourth century the Thebaid and the district of Nitria swarmed with hermits and anchorites. One of the most famous monasteries was that founded by Pachomius and 1,400 monks on the island of Tabenna, near Denderah, where Rufinus afterwards found 3,000 monks. The city of Oxyrhinchus, according to the same authority, had 10,000 monks and 20,000 nuns. In Nitria there were said to be 5,000 hermits and 50 monasteries.

† For example, the churches of S. M. Novella and Santa Croce in Florence; SS. Giovanni é Paolo and the Frati in Venice; S. Domenico and S. Chiara in Naples. In each of these cases the first church named is Dominican, and the second, Franciscan.

point we must leave the eastern world on one side, while in the Roman church the rôles become infinitely multiplied. Since then, but little has been added and of what there was some little yet remains. Those wardrobes, once so full, can still dress even the stage-crowd without whose aid we could not bring on our big scenes. Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Capuchin, are to be seen in number to this day ; while the Cistercian, now turned Trappist, the Olivetan, the Camaldolian, and the Carthusian, are still to be met with in certain appointed places.

But their virtue has left them. Now, monks are objects of pity, condemned to an uncomfortable imprisonment among the ruins of their broken illusions. The works of their hands, that side of them which interests us, we must remember to be the mere product of their hours off duty. The most of their time was prayers and penitence.

Their tortured senses, deprived of everything else, imagined the utmost luxuries of light, shuttering and dyeing it through painted histories. The more austere orders were denied even this, and their only satisfaction came from the chalk-white cliffs at the feet of which they knelt in prayer. Each wall of their churches is a steep precipice, and the eyes recognize such far-apart places as Alcobaça and Fountains, Tintern and Santas Creus, as individual attempts towards this same effect.

We can distinguish several types of ascetic. The idiot type, lolling in slothful inactivity and credited with holy inspiration from his mysterious, haunted movements ; the hard, unpleasant grumbler gloating over the inevitable pains to which his prayers condemn all enemies ; the easy, punctual lover of a quiet life ; the creeping,

curatical conspirator; the benevolent French missionary; the athlete in austerities, trying one after another for all the prizes in suffering; these are some of the actors of the cloister.

They formed, as I have suggested before, another sex over and above the accustomed, procreative pair. We must expect their lives, then, to attain to the normal through other directions; though this normality would naturally exceed the average as much as their privations put them below it.

We may imagine their pioneers as inquiring anxiously for the whereabout of the most uninhabited corners of the land. They wished to found new monasteries for their order, and this ambition could only be satisfied by finding an improbable locality for building. It must be far away, hidden in dense forest where they could clear the ground, or in a marsh where they could drain a little island for its foundations. It was the contrast that pleased their starved senses; the contradiction of a great monastery being built in a wilderness, and then the inner and perpetual difference between their hard lives and the stone bastions and lattices of this winter and summer prison, this palace where they toiled in sackcloth through the heat, and shivered barefoot in the cold.

We enjoy in a few seconds several centuries of their work, but are appalled and stifled if we think of their hours of prayer. Each monk will have spent a quarter of a century, if he lived to any age, upon this problematical insurance. Another third of their lives was sleep, and there remained this other part, made manifest in these works of stone.

Each of the great monasteries was a miniature republic,

supplying all its own needs and with no necessity for its inmates ever again to come into contact with the world of towns, once they had taken refuge in its walls. There was enough energy to drive out sadness, and we need not waste our pity on them. The drably uniform clothes, the regular routine of life, the strictly sufficient diet, left little of the individual. Each monk walked past his burial-place hundreds of times in a year, he was taught to look forward to death, and in the days of that real faith something approaching the corporate life of the insects must have been attained. Ants, and other communistic tribes of insect, have no fear of death. Science cannot explain this, but may it not be that they, too, think they will be born again ?

If we consider the monasteries to be the greatest manifestation of mediaeval energy, we must grant them space and time in their lives for an unparalleled finish to any task they set themselves. Given unlimited wealth ; a store, an accumulation as it were, of time to spend ; generations of skilled and anxious labour ; all the peace they had, and the inspiration their faith gave them, we should expect to find certain instances where they reached to a supreme expression of themselves in architecture. This hazard is justified in its examples, but the inquiry should begin on a humble scale by an examination of how much any one person could accomplish, whose whole life was passed in such surroundings of safety and tranquillity.

All the action is in a little room. A door leads from it into another cell where a bed, a table, and a chair, are the only incidents. The door into this second cell he never opens, save on his way to and fro from chapel, where our own conscience forbids us to follow him.

There is a view, and a little garden hanging below the window reached by some steps through a wicket in the passage. For a flagged corridor runs the length of the two rooms and joins this prison on to the outside world. Here is the third door that he passes on his way to prayer, and food is given to him through a doored trap, at shoulder-level in the wall.

But the inmost room with the garden below it is the focus of his whole life. It has the high desk and the railed chair of the scribe. Quill-pens, fine brushes of hair, precious colours in cockle-shells, agate burnishers, leaves of vellum, give point and animation to the incessant cold air. For it is seldom, or never, warm, and the hand is always chilled upon the vellum, slowed down and steadied, as it were, by this breath out of vault and tomb.

Good handwriting was expected of the author, or poet, in the same way that a composer of music is credited, till he always contradicts it, with a gift for the piano. Failure in this respect will always throw doubt upon his other talent; and where so few people could write at all the mediaeval author who was not something of a calligrapher had his career seriously affected by this shortcoming.

The professional scribe, then, filled the rôle of virtuoso, and his task was an interpretation of someone else's themes. His ornaments and flourishes were inspired out of the subject and were held to enhance the beauty of the original as so many cadenzas and scale passages enliven the bare tune in the piano arrangement of a song, or in a fantasia upon an opera.

This art of illumination had two golden ages. The first was in Ireland, and it produced intricate mazes of basket-work, hidden in and peeped out of by toothed

dragons and by all the sea-mythology of the North. The saints are shown red-haired and blue-eyed, in trousers and coats of what can only be identified as tweed of the Hebrides, dyed with sea-lichens and smelling of the peat-fire. The masterpiece of this school is the Book of Kells, now in Dublin. The second great period was in Carolingian Germany, where uncial letters, of purple and gold, ornament the most elaborately conceived architectural fantasies. But neither of these schools give us any indication of the details of life. The buildings in which we are interested had not yet begun, and it is necessary to leave these two formalisms some centuries behind.

Nor can we find satisfaction in the ivy-leaf borders of the French school, and in the tessellated, damasked, and diapered backgrounds to the figures, which thus imprison them and allow no effects of realism to be achieved. The Horae of John, Duke of Bedford, one of the treasures of the British Museum, marks the culmination of this attempt. Its burnished gold, as loud as a brass band, but applied sparingly, as though the strains came from far away, is the beauty of this particular manuscript; but it is difficult to think of the hand, or hands, that worked upon it as having belonged to an artist, for this is merely ornament and nothing else. Its effect is extremely monotonous, and a mere half-dozen pages, out of the hundreds that the book contains, are sufficient to satisfy curiosity and to stimulate a wish to move on a step further among the manuscripts.

But with careful search we can place exactly the things we have come to look for on the crowded desk in the chilly cell of the illuminator. For, at last, the most

delicate and gifted artists gave up their lives to the task, and there is no nearer approach than this to the truth of appearances and of the imagination in that day. It is probable that several of these trophies may be the work of lay artists, but their handiwork was the complete and final development out of the cloister, and so we can attach this last generation to the many centuries that went before it and think of this art's culmination as an intrinsic part of its whole history.

We shall be able to find certain paintings in manuscripts that have all the personality and characteristics of the individual. They will be the work of forgotten artists whose whole output is put away in some few books. Where one of these volumes is in a public library, it may be exhibited in a glass case with just one open page showing, and all the rest of it shut away and only accessible to the patient student. Having examined some few of these hidden things, there will be a chance of comparing them with the only other rivals to them in perfection, and in this same quality of being kept away and invisible. Even so, only the available examples out of the vast material that exists can be discussed here; and then it will be time to move off towards those places where the monks attained to the utmost freedom of expression in their architecture.

One of the most beautiful of these manuscripts is illustrated thrice over in this book. It is part of the Huth Library bequeathed to the British Museum, a tiny Book of Hours not much longer than the fingers.(2)

The volume opens with several pages of prayers written out in a microscopic hand of incredible delicacy and clearness. After this, comes the Calendar of the months illuminated with little roundels, no larger than

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

Two Vignettes from the Huth MS. 38126 in the British Museum.

[*Facing p.* 14.

a half-crown in size but forming a series of compositions complete in themselves. Two of this set of pictures are here reproduced. The real text of the Book of Hours follows after the calendar, and here are several full-page paintings, one of which forms the frontispiece to this book.

Through every page there are flower-paintings of exquisite fineness and poetry. Sometimes these are arranged upon variously treated golden backgrounds, and occasionally against a simulated silk, or brocade. Some decoration of this sort occurs on every page. In all, there are twenty-four full-page paintings and thrice that number of smaller miniatures, and it is no exaggeration to compute that a decade of years must have gone by before this Book of Hours was finished.

There are several remarkable points of interest attached to it. In the first place, in spite of the late date of this manuscript, its period must be about 1480 to 1490, no clearer instance can be found of the impression made, as it were upon the very landscape, by the armoured knight living in his castle on the horizon. Twice, already, in this book, have I stressed the manner in which a castle, or castles, are put by the artist into every single scene, holding the background by force and brandishing a drawn sword out of the air. This was the temporal, as the Church was the spiritual, subjection of the peasantry. The ruling race lived in these forts, and great bastions and capped towers were never far distant.

The second feature of this Book of Hours, once that triumphant feudality has been recognized, is the presence in it of several miniatures that make a really memorable contribution to the store of pictures that an intelligent eye can carry in the mind. These can be summoned

up in all their beauty to join with the fine Flemish primitives; while the usual book-ornaments, however intricately designed and minutely executed, fade away entirely and are forgotten.

The coloured frontispiece at the beginning of this book is taken from the most successful of these full-page paintings. This hermit, praying in the green wood beside his lath and timber retreat, is an interpretation of the subject that takes its place beside the St. Jerome of Antonello da Messina, and the St. Jerome, or St. Anthony, of Dürer. These three world-famous eremites, one of them hunched on a hillock in front of Nuremberg, and the other two in their elaborately comfortable libraries, are now joined by a fourth and forgotten companion.

This very young, spring wood that is the scene of his prayers is typical of Northern France in its fresh, almost shrill colour. There is a wonderful spontaneity about the picture; its Northern, and most un-Italian, qualities are expressed in a rapid smallness of touch that it is difficult to match in the works of any other painter. In many of Dürer's water-colours the same lath and plaster houses are to be seen, but they have become essentially German, and have the curious rat-infested look that goes with those piebald villages. The green lakes and jagged fir-trees of his water-colours are the accompaniment to the houses; but Dürer snaps and pounces upon his sketches and then finishes them to the bitter end in a very different spirit to the calm, tranquil mood of this miniature. It is coloured with the very green of the leaves.

The third, and perhaps most lasting, impression left by this Book of Hours is the extraordinary talent dis-

played in the flower-paintings. More especially where the calendar is concerned they follow the seasons in a regular order. The occupation chosen as being typical of each month is accompanied by a display of the flowers to be seen in the same span of time, and where this is within the bounds of fact insects and butterflies are shown hovering, or as though standing, on the worked gold of the background. In this latter respect, in the mingling of flowers with insects and butterflies, the only artist to compare with this unknown and anonymous talent is the famous Maria Sibylla Merian.(3)

This lady, who came of a family of flower-painters, was the only good Dutch artist who had the curiosity to convey her talent into any of the new countries colonized by her countrymen. She set forth with her daughter for Surinam, in South America, in 1698, and stayed there two years drawing the plants and insects of the country, returning thence to Amsterdam, where she and her daughter passed the remainder of their lives colouring the engravings that she caused to be made from her drawings, and selling them in bound volumes. She was the first person to study the chrysalis and to draw its different stages of development, and for this and other similar discoveries she has a scientific repute only second to her skill and renown as an artist. But her talent is in no way more remarkable than that of the unknown person who drew the flower-borders in this small Book of Hours.

It is a study, complete in itself, of all the flowers and insects of the land. Many preliminary drawings must have been made for each flower-border, and we may feel certain that in some instances the project will have been set aside till the following year, when the particular flower

wanted was eagerly waited for and at last the day came to search field or wood once more.

There is here all the enthusiasm for flowers of the Flemings and the Dutch, and it is easy to understand, after seeing the patient excitement expressed in these miniatures, how it came to pass that rare bulbs became the objects of maniacal gambling and speculation, so that whole families were ruined over them, only some century and a half after this manuscript was finished.(4) Then, the importation of flowers from newly discovered continents had begun, but, by the end of the fifteenth century, this had hardly started and only the indigenous plants grew in field and garden. Even so, there must have been great rarities, rich prizes for the enthusiast, and we may think of the artist offering a small reward for the bringing to him of an unusual flower or insect. Without this incentive his choice could not have ranged over such wide varieties. Indeed, it is possible that close examination of the book by an expert botanist might discover some flowers now lost and extinct.

Especially successful is his portrayal of some of the earliest spring flowers, coming, in fact, so near to winter that the hardiness of anything so delicate and fragile is difficult to credit. The snowdrops are treated several times over, having each time a page all to themselves in their whiteness. The more simple kinds of blue flowers, periwinkles for instance, are also rendered with an amazing fidelity and in a freshness of blue colour that must have been obtained after endless search. The powdering of the butterflies' wings comes out in all its flaunting and extravagant texture ; and with their gilded and painted sails these insects hover above the flowers,

or are at rest upon a band of gold which is rayed and striped as though with the sun's beams.

This book is an epitome of all the strength which that age did not waste in war. Peaceful and pretty cleanliness, as of a béguinage, speaks of a low horizon and a landscape continually washed with floods. Where everything was so near and so comfortable, the strange and the romantic dwelt only in marshlands, where the far-off mewing of the seabirds gave a mystery to the tepid shallows ; and, to some slighter extent, in the little woods of the land, when the first flowers climbed out of the thinning snow and it seemed as if no feet had trod here since the last bonfire smoke in a blue autumnal afternoon.

Apart from this, nature was tame and lay in easy reach of the hand. None of its terrors came to disturb the harmony of life, which could go on, day after day, year after year, to exactly the same pattern, thus allowing, and, indeed, insisting upon, the same traits being reproduced in the works of men's hands. Nowhere else could this particular masterpiece of patience have lived into its own completion. But this was the land of tapestries, where those wonders of the North were woven, and they share the same qualities of steady breath and slow endurance.

As for the cell of this illuminator, we can think of its windows as within sight of the swans on the canal. Trees, men, and houses were timed, like so many hour-glasses, to bring about their punctual and anticipated effects. The trees rattled their bronze leaves, and then dropped them to be swept into mounds where they lay like so many thousands of pairs of brown boots, tremendously shrunken and crinkled in proportion ;* later on, the bare

* I am indebted for this image to my sister.

branches moved in little tongues of fire and green leaves began ; or the fruit trees heaped themselves with snows of blossom.

This was the time when so many flowers were brought into his cell that work fell some days behind ; and they stood waiting in vases, or lay neatly dried ready to be drawn into a final version after their colour had been studied from life. But he came up inevitably to the surface of his work again by incessant application, never allowing himself to be turned away from the object he had in mind. No sentiment, no feeling of nostalgia, ever disturbed this Flemish calm. In all other places, life, inevitably as dull as this when it was peaceful, brimmed over with dangers.

The next manuscript from which a miniature is reproduced has been chosen as representing an entirely different world from that of the bourgeois tranquillity of the Book of Hours. Its interest is of a directly different nature. It moves among the creatures of fashion, mirroring their vagaries whenever opportunity allows.

This manuscript contains the poems of Christine de Pisan.(5) It has, like the other, a miniature on nearly every page. The frontispiece to the book is reproduced here, and it shows the authoress reading her poems to Queen Isabeau of Bavaria. The Queen is sitting in a high, narrow room with her ladies round her. There is hardly another miniature of the time as valuable as this for its treatment of dress and its view of an inhabited room, giving the exact appearance of a scene of everyday life among the capricious elongations of their buildings, and with dresses, furniture, and every object in use, conforming to those strange and improbable principles.

ILLUMINATION FROM THE POEMS OF CHRISTINE DE PISAN.

[*Facing p.* 20.

Our eyes are too familiarized to appreciate it in all its strangeness. But there has never been such a transformed reality. Everything true and obvious is hidden, or worked round to some other purpose. Wherever possible, the lines of the human body are concealed, and if this cannot be done, the truth is exaggerated out of all conformity to fact. A fanatical affectation against the ordinary and the expected was the reason for this, and this, in its turn, came from the tired monotony of aristocratic life, where the established nobles had held undisputed dominion and been in possession of all the wealth for many hundreds of years, for a longer space of time, in fact, than has elapsed between the death of the Gothick Age and our own century.

War and rebellion were the only dangers, but, even then, treaties were honourably kept. Wives and daughters had never to fear for their own safety, the huge edifice of chivalry protected them. They were beginning to be tired.

As against the new and growing burgher merchant class, whose civilization is typified by the Book of Hours just discussed, even if this particular manuscript may have been ordered by an aristocratic book-collector, we have here, in these miniatures to the poems of Christine de Pisan, a specimen of the delights of the dying feudal age, and a record of the form they took. Their diversity and extravagance show how old and recondite they had become.

The age was isolated from all contact with any other culture. Until the revived learning came upon them, driven into the West by the Turks, there was nothing to break this spell, and changes of fashion were confined to variations upon somewhat limited themes, so that

imagination worked wildly in its search for something new. But a young and vigorous stock was exploiting these faded principles. They were beginning to tire of their confinement into such limited directions, and this sense stemmed up the energy which flowed into the Renaissance as soon as it had the opportunity. But in the miniature we reproduce there is no foreshadowing of that new adventure.

You would imagine, to look at it, that art could take no other form than this and that it was anchored, for ever, in this dimension. This has happened in other cases, more particularly in Mohammedan countries, where there may have been three or four revivals of art, at intervals of two or three centuries, and in each case exactly the same principles have been resuscitated into life, and at the end of it hardly any new discoveries remain to be added to the total of the race's achievement. So might it have been in Northern Europe had classical literature perished during the centuries of barbarism, and this might easily have been so ; in fact, its contradiction of truth is one of the miraculous events in human history. Had none of the poetry or philosophy of the old world survived, its remains in sculpture and architecture would have deserved little notice and could never have received adequately documented study. Then, the alert vigour of the Northern races would have had to perfect new developments out of their own racial beginnings, and the pointed arch might have remained for ever as the symbol of European man.

It was only the feudal age, only the possessors of that hereditary power, who were beginning to show fatigue. Under them, the masses were starting their serious multiplication into the unwieldy and unled hordes of

this present. Kings were consolidating their positions at the expense of the nobles on every hand. A paralysis was setting in, and the castle-dwellers were growing into an anomaly, into an unnecessary precaution, into the holders of privileges that could no longer be upheld.

The third manuscript to be discussed here is the Prayer Book of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, now in the Imperial Library at Vienna. We give an illustration of one of the miniatures in this wonderful volume. It shows Maximilian and Maria of Burgundy kneeling at prayer in a great cathedral. The view into this is through a casement, with its mullions flung open and lying back against the walls of the room. The whole exterior scene is framed in this way. At the side of the window, a lady in the high steeple hat and flowing wimple of the time sits reading her missal, which lies, with her beads and a pair of carnations, upon the window-sill. The missal has its wrappings still round it, so that it is like a parcel packed in cloth, instead of paper, and just arrived. On the opposite side the thrown-back mullion, with a hint of reflections, never quite made manifest, in its cobbles, has a glass vase of tall irises set against it, and this is made the occasion for a miraculous piece of painting. The great nave of the church lies in front of all this, with the sun's spot-lights darting through the painted windows. Maximilian and his wife are kneeling before the Virgin, who is enthroned, much larger than life, upon the altar-steps. A carpet is spread in front of her, and on the corners of this there are four angels, prostrated by the side of four great brazen candelabra. Maria of Burgundy wears the exaggerated steeple hat, that would be expected of her, and her three ladies behind her have headgear only diminished by the necessary conventions

of rank and distance. Of this beautiful miniature all that can be said is that it is one of the supreme achievements of Flemish art. Indeed, it is as beautiful as the triptych of the Seven Sacraments at Antwerp, which is the masterpiece, rather similar in subject, of Roger van der Weyden.

Such are the comments of these three manuscripts upon the life to which they were witness. Even so, they are nearly unknown examples, chosen rapidly from the nearest available sources. This was the North, in its own indigenous appearance. It was centuries old and had reached to an alert, busy state that was only contradicted by the tired, dulled nobles. The art of the miniaturist, taken, now, out of the hands of the monk whose monopoly it had been, was at its culmination. Printing was already invented, and soon this particular kind of trouble would no longer be taken.

Meanwhile, as though to afford a parallel by which to judge it, this same art was flourishing to an equal, or greater extent, far away, in another part of the world. It was in the service of another aristocracy, yet more idyllic from the opportunities its wealth afforded it. This was in Persia.

The Persians, who were not of Semitic origin, had not the same hatred as the Jew and the Arab for a graven or painted image. Painting, therefore, was occasionally practised among them, but was confined almost entirely to miniature-painting. Apart from this one direction, the artists had to find other outlets for their activity. In the cases of Sultan Muhammad and Mirak, two of the greatest among them, the first was a bookbinder, a clock-maker, a designer of carpets, and a painter upon porcelain ; while the second was an ivory-carver and an expert

calligrapher, for it is said that all the old buildings in Herat are decorated with inscriptions from his hand.

It is these two artists who painted most of the miniatures in the poems of Nizami, the finest Persian manuscript of the sixteenth century, which has just been made available to the public for the first time by its recent publication.* Until now, only students have had access to its beauties, for the Persian manuscripts are hidden away from the world to an even greater extent than are those of European origin. Their miniatures illustrate a literature which is invariably badly translated, if even this amount of attention is paid to it. But the best artists of one of the most ancient of civilizations put their finest work into these small limits and painters of the quality of Carpaccio, or Cima da Conegliano, are in this way withheld and kept out of experience.

The greatest of them is Bihzad. He was born about 1450, and passed his life between Herat and Tabriz, but chiefly in the latter city. Strictly speaking, then, Bihzad was Afghan in nationality. Mr. F. R. Martin knows of ten books, containing some ninety miniatures by his hand. Two of these are in the British Museum. They, also, are the poems of Nizami, and they contain, between them, thirty-seven miniatures by Bihzad, so that it is possible to see in London more than one third of this great artist's still existent works. The larger of the two manuscripts (Or. 6810) is dated 1494 and contains seventeen works by Bihzad and five by his pupil Mirak ; the second manuscript (Add. 25900) is of minute size and is dated 1442. It has twenty paintings by Bihzad, but these have been inserted at a later date,

* "The Poems of Nizami," with an introduction by Laurence Binyon, *The Studio*, London, 1928.

probably about sixty years after it was written, when Bihzad was, himself, an old man. They were painted into this older manuscript to the order of Shah Ismail, the founder of the Safavid dynasty of Persian Kings.

It is not necessary, therefore, to go further than these two manuscripts to get an idea of Bihzad's powers, but his talents and execution are reinforced by two other things. In the first place it is difficult to conceive of the care exercised by the Persians in their choice of paper. Various sorts were manufactured by different, devious processes, and, once this was done, the surface was incessantly polished for weeks together with an egg-shaped crystal. Leaves of good paper were valuable and commanded high prices. Secondly, the style of the calligraphy was as important as the beauty of the paintings. It was the subject of much technical discussion and criticism. The pull and balance of each curve was taken into account and all sorts of details were considered important which even trained eyes can hardly appreciate. Some of the finest gold writing was done with the nail point of the index finger, and a virtuoso of this sort must have taken as much care of his one finger as a Paderewski ever did of his two hands. These minutiæ of technique are refinements and delicacies of which no European has ever been capable in the arts. It is not only patience which is lacking, but it may be thought with reason that these artists who never touched alcohol or tobacco must have possessed a steadier eye and hand than has been granted to any European, even in the virtuous vacuum of the cloister.

These two manuscripts, whatever their present sale-room value may be, were esteemed at a much higher price by the Moghul Emperors. There were never more

than a handful of good Persian artists, and the Moghul Emperors, who were arduous collectors, paid sums equivalent to a hundred thousand pounds for fine manuscripts illuminated by any of the three painters named. Of these Bihzad had the greatest reputation, and his works were nearly unprocurable, even to the massed wealth of India. Persian was the court language, the great poets had been Persian, and these written and painted masterpieces were the greatest works of the world in which they lived. There was nothing better for the dilettante to buy.

Let us try to imagine this world so strange to our experience! Tabriz, which is to us a name fringed with daggers, was in Bihzad's day a city of poets and scholars. It is covered in snow for four months of the year, but after that the spring comes and the whole town breaks into blossom. In climate and in general character, Tabriz is said to much resemble Brusa. If we want to think, then, of the things which lay in front of Bihzad's eyes, we need go no further than Brusa. This is a Persian town built nearly into Europe. Its mosques and medersas have none of the honeycombs and stalactites of the Moors, but are mosaiced with tiles. The floral designs on a green, or blue, ground are as though flowers had been dropped on the grass, or were held in the sky. All round, the cypress, the flowering peach-tree, the flowering rose-bush, give the motives that Bihzad loved to paint. For, in his miniatures, sprays of blossom hold themselves in blinding detail against the sky, and have to cross the green bars of the cypresses in order to do this. As for the sky, it is either as blue as lapis, or is literally burnished with sun.

If it is the country, and not a garden, the glare of the

desert is wonderfully imaged in gold, but he always seems to choose that fortnight in the year when the desert breaks into flower and the sand is sown with blossom. A plane-tree will be growing among the rocks, for Bihzad had a particular talent for rendering this tree with its smooth bark and tinted leaves. A little water-spring may be flowing away in silver, which the age of the manuscript has oxidized and turned black.

Where buildings are concerned, Bihzad facsimiles all the tile-work in a minute fashion which Van der Heyden could never attain to ; in the smaller of these two manuscripts (Add. MS. 25900) there are occasions where literally some thousands of tiles have been separately painted in the space of a few inches. And, apart from this gleaming detail, hundreds of the most intricate tile-patterns are shown. Where he signed his name, Bihzad's signature is so small that it has escaped the eyes for hundreds of years and is only now become visible again with the help of a strong microscope.

Only mosques were built with an idea of permanence, and the tiled pavilions typical of these miniatures were quickly put up, and as quickly abandoned. They occur in Bihzad's pictures wherever there is an excuse for portraying the interior of a palace, or whenever a prince grants an audience. They had little more importance in the owner's eyes than a favourite tent, and, as in a tent, he was here surrounded by the same easily portable properties, rugs, trays, porcelain cups and beakers.

Sometimes his pictures actually deal with tent-life. The encampments are made from gorgeous rugs. At the back stand the black, goatskin tents of the nomads ; they are lighting their fires, the goats feed in the crevices of the rocks, and the shepherds in their striped clothes

play their pipes, or lean on their crooks looking down at the royal encampment. Such scenes, by a device which Bihzad invented and his followers specialized into a habit, are divided and emphasized by the tent-cords. These blue and white, twined ropes are tied to pegs at various strategical points in the picture and give perspective to the composition. Figures are seen in front of, or behind their lines, and are in this way secured and proved in the positions their feet give them in the landscape.

But Bihzad had a sense of realism that none of his followers inherited from him. There are two instances of this in the manuscript we are discussing; a mosque is being built and the blue-robed workmen are shown busily at work on the scaffolding; and, in the second picture, the interior of a bath-house is shown, the figures of the bathers are seen, and their blue, or black robes are hung up and used to the best advantage in the picture. These two miniatures are without parallel in the stiff and formal art of Persia.

After looking, even for some few days, at the beauties of these Persian manuscripts, their conventions become necessary and unavoidable in the mind, and it is difficult to believe in the existence of another art of the same kind devoted to a different climate, an alternative race of men, an alien religion. The turbans; the serious beards; young men and women conforming to the same standards of beauty, being, thus, most difficult to distinguish between; the minaret and the muezzin clinging to the parapet for utmost shrillness to his voice; the patterned and crenellated town-walls; the delicate gazelle-like horses; the spread, or pitched rugs for floor, or tent; the flowering trees; the cypress; the red-legged

partridge; the stork on its nest; the adder in the hollow of the stones; all these are points which add up into the total, detailed presentment of this one kind of life. How should it be possible that in another part of the world these same things, based only on their own essential differences, should reach to the same finality, as if to cancel out any parallel excellence?

But in these few score miniatures out of a handful of manuscripts we find a great artist imprisoned who was allowed no other outlet, and given no opportunity bigger than this for his talents. He is a Carpaccio, a Benozzo Gozzoli, confined within these tiny limits, but moving in a world which we find more interesting because of its strangeness to our eyes. Nothing like this ever came out of the North, and the patient, cold fancies of the frost lose their poetry beside the possibilities of this Persian art.

When it had become freed from its own primitive chains, perhaps the greatest beauties possible to a Gothick, a transitional epoch might have been attained. But no Moslem culture has ever got further than this stage, and none has ever outlived the lives of two generations. Nothing came of it, and the last good painters of the school were men who had been alive in Bihzad's lifetime.

In Western Europe men of less talent than this were numbered in their hundreds, and were allowed all the tranquillity that their sex ensured to them—for so we may term it where a monk is concerned. This was, in itself, another advantage over the Moslems, who have no clergy and no monasteries, if we except a few societies of dervishes who are occupied only in hysterical pandemonium. Their artists were individual persons and not members of a corporation, let off military service,

guaranteed food and lodging, and given a presumption of eternal life if only they would behave in the present. Monasteries had privileged immunity in time of war, and, indeed, the only enemy they had to fear was accidental fire. But for this, nothing ever came to disturb their centuries of slow growth.

The more poetical and less assured alternative to this lived by no continued breath, but flickered now and again into life. It was transplanted out of Persia into India, but stayed there no longer than its customary two generations. Since then, it has never lifted its head, and vitality would seem to have left it for ever. The Moghul palaces were the scenes of its last signs of life. The jewelled inlay, the pierced lattices, the marble swimming-baths, the arches, fretted like shells and of lucent, pearl-like marble, these were the items of its most emasculate stage, and, since then, there has been nothing. These limits of the Aryan world have given no more to the senses, and the mosques and palaces of Delhi and Agra are the last contribution of this other mediaeval tradition. But the dangerous perfections of this Moghul work range themselves with the filigree courts of the Alhambra as something too finished to afford any further inspiration to the artist. They are no use to him, and he prefers something that his imagination can complete.

As for the strict and authentic Gothick of the West, building activity was on such a prodigal scale of magnificence that very few projects ever reached to oriental finish and perfection. The nervous suppleness of the Gothick mind caused constant changes of plan, and it is not rational to expect the sort of homogeneity over a long stretch of years that is to be found in some buildings of the Baroque period, or in Southern India.

There, Fergusson cites some twenty cities, each one of them representing as much architectural and sculptural energy as is contained in a cathedral in France or Spain, but all of them absolutely formal and continuous in method. Thousands of hands worked upon them over a long period of years, but ideals never altered from age to age. Such temples have a servile patience that makes their detail painful to the eyes. They are the unpleasant memorial of a population whom an era of peace caused to swarm like insects. They lived like flies and died like flies ; and their fussy, teeming works remain behind them, as useless as the galleries of an old ant-hill.

Nevertheless, it was a true cathedral-age that produced them. It was the fashion at a certain stage in man's development, like the megalithic age that produced Karnak and Stonehenge, rude echoes, perhaps, of the rumours of Egypt. The Hindu temples are the works of a second cathedral-age standing parallel to the stone doxologies of Northern and Western Europe.

Specimens of this are the Dravidian temples of Trivalur and Vijayanagar, and the Chalukyan temples of Hallabid and Somnathpur. At its most Northern extent are the Black Pagoda of Kanarak, the temple at Bhuvaneshwar, and the famous Juggernaut temple at Puri. All of these, being English property, are unadvertised and comparatively little known, but they form a most interesting parallel to the similar activities of Christianity. Their date is mainly the thirteenth century, but some of them are much later than this; indeed, the temples of Ramesvaram and Madura are of the seventeenth century, being certainly the most curious products of the age of Charles I and Louis XIII.

At the very furthest extent of this movement are the

temples of Borolbudor in Java, and the Khmer buildings in Cambodia, of which Angkor-Vat and Angkor-Thom are the most famous examples. These, again, have strict affinity to what Celt and Teuton were doing ; and it is necessary to think of this when the works of Cistercian monks are being extolled as the unique glory of our twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There were other enthusiasms just as vehemently elaborate in the forms they took.

With regard to these Javanese temples, their origin was Buddhist and not Hindu. Their great epoch of construction was in the ninth century, so that they form the latest Buddhist buildings of any considerable scale ; but the inspiration behind them was undoubtedly influenced by the Hindu and Brahman constructions. They must represent a sort of Counter-Reformation in Buddhist architecture, and are the last vigorous contradiction to the new order that was coming in before the Buddhist religion had to forsake India altogether. Its centres remained in Ceylon, in Burma, in Japan, and in China, and so the Javanese temples we may consider as an effort to stem the new religion and preserve the old by adaptation of the principles that were attractive or impressive in this danger to their own tenets. But, less than two centuries after this, not the Hindus but the Moslems, a most distant and improbable foe, conquered Java and the temples of Borolbodur were deserted. The jungle took possession of them, and they are not heard of again till Sir Stamford Raffles, a temporary English Governor of Java during the Napoleonic Wars, discovered them and cleared the ruins in 1814.

A Chinese traveller, Tcheou Ta Kouan, who visited Angkor in 1296, gives a few details that are just sufficient

to rescue it from the degree of historical deadness of Borolbodur, or of the Maya temples in Guatemala. He describes the five gates of the town, and the bridges across the moats. Guarding these bridges, at both ends, were one hundred and eight stone statues of genii, like stone generals, gigantic and terrible. The parapets of the bridges were cut in the form of serpents, each cobra having nine heads.

The King wore wreaths of jasmine, or a golden crown in his hair, walked barefoot, and had the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands dyed red. He slept in his palace on the summit of a golden tower. When he came out from his palace, three to five hundred of the girls of the palace preceded him, with flowers in their hair and carrying lighted torches in their hands, even if it was daytime. Then followed more girls carrying his royal insignia, and his vessels of gold and silver, and finally a troop of Amazons armed with lance and shield, who were his bodyguard. After them came golden chariots drawn by horses, and by deer. The King rode an elephant. He carried the sacred sword in his hand, and was sheltered from the sun by umbrellas. Many more elephants surrounded him on all sides.

The King was a God, the spiritual, as well as the physical, dweller in the palace. The troupe of dancing girls were servants, or priestesses, to his sanctity, and they filled a hieratic rôle in the constitution, as it were, of the Khmer Kingdom. The whole happiness of the people depended on his communion with his sacred ancestors, and this was only made possible through his contentment on earth. He lived in a sacred maze, or bee-hive. It was a monastery, but with a difference.

In fact, the theatre, which imagination always projects

as a possible, or preferred alternative to the church, had here been definitely installed as a religion in itself. Dancing-girls, who were practised gymnasts and posturists of the most alluring grace and symmetry, established the Khmer temples as the scene of the ultimate point ever reached by the erotic senses in their search for beauty. The echoes of this are to be seen in the bas-reliefs with which the temples are decorated, and some poor shadow of it lingers in the royal dancing-troupes of the King of Annam, and of the Sultans of the native states in Java.(6)

The spirit of this monastic civilization, for it was essentially a cult set up by, and continued by, monks, is the very antithesis to the ideals, for instance, of the Cistercians ; they are such wide-apart interpretations of what was really the same epoch that they have come back near to each other. They are so little removed that the slightest extension of the principles of either of them would lead into a fusion of their processes.

The battalions of monks, or nuns, with their privations and hardships ; their repudiation of the flesh ; the solitary confinement for life that they loved to inflict upon themselves ; their scourgings and penitence ; their midnight masses, so contrived that more than a couple of hours' consecutive sleep was impossible, and so that the snow in the court should have to be crossed before the freezing floor of the church was reached ; all these self-tortures are but a little way removed from the sacred licence and debauchery of the pagodas. Certainly these two principles, the complete negation and contradiction of each other, held exactly the same force of stimulus to the artisan of these two cathedral-ages.

The Hindu temples are the most picturesque and

unlikely works ever created by men's hands, and it is no use adopting a too impatient attitude towards them if we want to confess an admiration, at the same time, for abbeys and cathedrals in our own midst. They are built to a far more severe plan than might be suspected, being definitely in some cases works directed by one particular architect, as, for example, at Somnathpur, where the temple was made to the design of Jakanacharya, the sculptor and architect of the Ballala Kings.

If we cannot afford time, or patience, to think of them, we need only consider the situation of an intelligent Hindu traveller in Europe, who, while admiring the usefulness of our inventions and the pictures by great masters in our galleries, might find it difficult to devote his attention to cathedrals in England, France, or Spain, which he would at once attribute to the same rather mythical, pagan dullness from which he was trying to escape on his travels.

But it is no use denying them their environment. They are as well adapted to this as are the works of Gothick builders to the rain and mist they had to consider. The mystery and horror of the temple-precincts, many of them, even now, never yet trodden by the white man's foot; the placid lakes and their lilied banks; stone corridors, like those at Ramesvaram, over four thousand feet in length, and sculptured through all this extent to the height of thirty feet; all these have a merely statistical value, with which, apart from questions of beauty, none of the achievements of Christianity can compete. And the temple of Madura, even in a photograph, is the mysterious and unfathomable relic of something which the eyes find it most difficult to put into reality. For the Hindu culture is the one, out of

all historical periods, which it is hardest to clothe and colour in the mind.

The men of turbans were Moslem, nor must we expect here the beards and fierce moustaches of the Moslem warriors. Neither did their women walk veiled. These are true idolaters, bowing down to wood and stone. Their temples are the triumphal cars of the god, petrified and brought to a standstill. The sculptures writhe and twist their bodies, standing, row above row, upon eaves that carry no roof and only lead into a smaller, diminished row above them. Their contortions are helped by more than the usual allowance of legs and arms, certainly the most primitive method of attributing superior powers to a deity. But these carved pagodas are the only parallel that history can establish to the sculptured fronts and sides of cathedrals, such as Chartres, or Wells.

As for the lives led in these tumultuous shadows, denial of the flesh was certainly only one part out of the immense repertory of holy action, and its exact opposite as a celebration of gratitude for the gift of life was just as reputable a rôle to play. These were the same colleges of nuns as in the Christian world, but with a different end, that of sacred prostitution, for which purpose the nuns were trained from the earliest age. The groves of Ashtaroth stood open in the enervating heat, and the sacred orgy sounded its horns and half-heard voices.

The arts of life were not understood and have never been developed by the Hindus ; their immense pantheon and its complex translation into stone imagery, is the only energy they have contributed to the history of human progress. The life of religious contemplation, as practised by them, was in the nature of an idiot-trance, suggesting the bowed head and fixed stare of the imbecile child.

But the mere complication, the dreary weight of the mythology they had invented, trapped the mind in its mazes. Life was an elaborate game in which the moves were so many advantages, or losses, incurred from using or avoiding the different, established symbols that were strewn thickly through the ordinary events of life, and had an immediate, an electrical, contact with their corresponding values in the celestial plane.

In fact, this was a strictly urban culture with the slums never far away. Plague and famine were always present to the mind, and, indeed, an outbreak of plague was the inevitable aftermath of any important religious festival. All the effects of their architecture were calculated for a noisy, proletarian audience who used to brawl and kill each other in their excitement. At the same time, these feelings, which were the stimulus they got from worship, had to be encouraged, and, therefore, the excitant, the lascivious, and the triumphant, were the moods that their art set forth and that they wished to be echoed in their crowds of devotees. This was easy enough in a mob of such dimensions, for the swarming plains of India had a population with which no contemporary European country could compare.

It is the rainy season. Every human being has a cold. Rain falls in a roaring cataract, drumming and jangling upon leaf and stone. The proud Indies bow down and are bound with waters. The rain is as thick as jungle. Its knots and cables trail down from the trees and are impenetrable. To walk through them is to be hit by a chain of hammers, and to be thrown clear of them soaked and beaten by their force.

The doors of the temples are guarded by rods of rain, which the sudden winds blow forth in a gust as though

the roofs were spitting them out. This is a hammering on a different note, sucked back again by the eaves and then thrown out once more in direct personal attack. The inky sky lies just overhead. It is a bed of sponges violently discharging their water, as if wanting to hide, when dry. Lightning cracks its whips ; perpetual thunder sounds ; the terrible typhoon has come.

It blows in from the sea. The order of the universe has been changed and the sky has assumed all the waters of the sea. If you try to walk in it, the storm pounces upon your clothes as upon so many rags of sail. A rattling, as of ropes against their masts, goes with this and a great splitting of wood as the branches are wrenched from their sockets, to fall, like the refuse of the tides, on the wind's edges, where they roll along their spoils before them.

If it clears, thick steam rises and all objects drip with perspiration. The earth is being sipped up into the sky and the waters are only taken up to be thrown down once more. This happens like a timed clock to an appointed hour of the unseen sun. The air is full of fever. One raindrop booms like a bell under sea, giving warning of what is to come. For the waters hiss out of the sky again, having scarcely time, indeed, to sieve their weight into drops ; they fall in headlong collapse, tumbled out of the clouds that burst their weight like sacks too full of grain.

This happens, day after day, night after night, and sometimes darkness is the more light of the two. Then, at last, the loud noises are no more than echoes. It is their reflection and not themselves ; they are growing old and their forces shake and are uncertain.

The spent typhoon knocks, now, like a ghost in the

wainscoting. The old tyrant is dying and can nearly be mocked. Its far-off thunders, and its little voice of wind can summon no more rain. It makes a last brave show of lightnings to prove it is not failing but has only moved far off, and then the flowers and leaves begin to rise up like springs.

A myriad blossoms, so rayed and petalled that they might drop like insects off the branches, hang down their baits and ask the hand to shake them, which is their child-begetting. Or they twine like parasites into the trees, strangling the living scaffold that they climb, and light their stars high up in alien leaves, dwelling between earth and sky.

The temples are strung with flowers, the sacred cows wear garlands between their horns, and the holy pleasure-gardens are thrown open to the public. Even the tanks bear lilies out of their mud, and blossoms are in the air, on the ground, and in the water. Scents breathe, as compact as clouds, at every step, so small and solid that a way has to be forced through them, and they add a sated weariness to the fatigues of walking. There is such a glare of light that every fixed object moves if you look at it, and more than two things standing together are impossible for the eyes to number. Nor can they remember any details that lie before them, and the multiple carvings on the temples have been arranged by a prodigal hand so as to dazzle the retina, and beat down the eyes before such proof by number. Nowhere is there any peace, or a corner not made loud with gesticulation.

Galloping horses. reared up suddenly at a word of command, are carved in stone at the entrance, and their bridles are held by dwarves, who are men of ordinary

human stature. The Gopurams, or gate-towers, stand out in the swooning heat and seem to be rolling away like stone chariots; while the statues, as did the sailors on an old man-of-war, man the yards and cling to any foothold they can find.

The most intense fire of fanaticism burns on every face. The attendants on the god may number as many as six thousand male adults, all living like monks in the temple enclosure, and divided into thirty-six orders and ninety-seven classes. There are distinct sets of servants to put the god to bed, to dress and bathe him, and a great band of Nautch-girls to dance and sing before him. The Rajah is hereditary sweeper of the temple. When the god issues forth in procession from the temple, his chariot, which is forty-five feet high and is supported on sixteen wheels, is drawn by four thousand two hundred professional haulers, who have been worked up into the highest frenzy of fanaticism. It is like a procession in Messina, or Seville, except that all this army of attendants live their lives free, and are supported on the temple revenues, derived from offerings and endowments.*

But these parallels to our abbeys and cathedrals differ from us in this very disparity of numbers. The Gothick places of worship were always built many times too big for their audience, however swollen by a pilgrimage, or some saint's celebration. It was their policy to impress by size, and where a Hindu temple is crowded with sculpture and swarms with its fanatical worshippers, a

* These figures refer to the temple of the Juggernaut at Puri. They may be compared with the temple of Ta Prohm at Angkor, which, at the end of the twelfth century, had 18 major and 2,740 ordinary officials, 2,232 assistants and 615 dancing girls. In its enclosure 12,640 persons had their lodging and accommodation. It may be added that the whole city of Angkor is estimated at this date to have contained nearly two millions of inhabitants.

cathedral must be always cold and empty. The scale that they chose as their instrument over the audience was height, more than length. There must be a hundred, even two hundred, feet of air above each head, a freedom in dimension which would be impossible if, for instance, every person in an audience of ten thousand people had to stand a hundred or two hundred feet away from his neighbour.

The same problem presents itself in the modern city of New York. A skyscraper, seven hundred feet high, but built on a base of only two hundred feet each way, will accommodate on its different floors what is equivalent to a town of ten thousand workers. If this were spread out over the ground, an area of many thousand acres, really equal in size to a town of offices for ten thousand people to work in, would have to be built. Or we may think of it in this way : that the whole diurnal population of the true City of London might work in fifteen to twenty of these towers, built along both sides of a street which would not need to be more than a quarter of a mile long. The skyscrapers are true examples of the Gothick spirit ; their effect is simply that of a cathedral, secularized, with floors put into it.

The men of the Gothick age wanted room to breathe in and room to move in. It was the spirit of freedom and the sense of cleanliness beginning to work. In fact, the further away they could get from each other, the more they were pleased, and the more ideal conditions became for communion with the god they worshipped. Even the small lands they lived in had remote corners where solitude could be achieved.

In the case of our own country it is only necessary to think of the four most beautiful relics of their energy.

The first was in the vale of York, still lying desolate and uncultivated after the ravages of William the Conqueror; the second was in a remote peninsula reached across wild, rugged hills and jutting out into the Irish Sea; the third drew its wealth from the pasture-lands of Somerset; and the fourth was in the loveliest valley in England, remotely peaceful and just safe from the Welsh tribes.* These are four cardinal situations than which better could not be found, each of them in a centre of bucolics, surrounded by farms, woods and pastures, and each of them typifying quite different beauties and profits of nature.

From their humble beginnings these monasteries soon began to acquire great properties. Fountains, for example, had one single estate of sixty thousand acres in Craven, walled round with a ring-fence. But the English monasteries never swarmed with monks, as did many convents in southern parts of Europe, and their wealth was devoted to the elaboration of the buildings and to the comfort of few more than the original foundation of monks. The accounts of the commissioners for the Dissolution are always a surprise upon this point, and the great size of the churches and their riches in plate, jewels, and vestments, are in strict contrast with the few monks appointed to live by them. Their office was more like that of the Fellows in an Oxford or Cambridge college.

Unfortunately, life in such places was broken into and dispersed far too long ago for it to be possible to gather its threads into any convincing colours. Not only are the buildings in ruins, but their destruction came when only one half of their normal history had been accomplished. Where would be the monasteries in Spain, in

* Fountains, Furness, Glastonbury, Tintern.

Italy, or in Germany, without their evidence of all the changes in taste between the year 1500 and the middle of the eighteenth century? Yet this is the situation in England. The epoch of great constructions, which lasted everywhere else for five centuries, has, in our case, been curtailed to half that period of time.

Even so, there was opportunity to work away from the original Gallic beginnings into the one original invention of mediaeval English architecture. This was the fan-vaulting, first practised in the great monasteries of the West country. It was first used, between 1351 and 1377, in the cloister at Gloucester, and since this is one of the monastery churches kept on as a cathedral, it can still be seen, uninjured save by the ravages of time. Indeed, in its way, it is the most beautiful thing to be seen in the whole kingdom.

Its later uses in the small chapels of the Perpendicular age are not so happy, but in this cloister at Gloucester, its delicacy and gracefulness bear comparison with the finest Moorish work in Fez or Granada. No better setting could be devised by the imagination for the ultra-refinements of contemporary dress. Sleeves cut like the edge of a leaf, or a fish's fin, shoes tied to the knee-cap by a gilt chain, the folded turbans that men wore, and the aeroplane or butterfly hats of the women—these were extensions of the ordinary, as forced as periwig or hooped skirt, that demanded something as suited to them as the volutes and rilled curves of that later age.

The love of conceits, the passion for the transcendental, had known these earlier days of licence. It was a fancifulness of distinctly worldly type that gave birth to the stone stalactite, and to the pillar branched into a palm. They were the product of a mind working along social

lines, no longer terrified of the god it worshipped, but resolved to turn its safety and leisure into comfort and ornament. To reach to this state, there had been an obvious prelude of some generations, falling away from the dogmatic and the categorical into the discovery that this kind of life was a pension, and that it allowed many mitigations in its original harshness and crudity. Unfortunately, poverty ensuing after senseless wars waged to no purpose over the lives of three generations, followed almost immediately by the bullying of Henry VIII, and its culmination of torture, expropriation, and execution, ruined all these possibilities and made their promise null and void.

But now the horizon must be lifted. All over the white man's world these hives of energy were at work. The wealth of a town was reckoned as much by the monasteries and convents in it as by the riches of its merchants, or dues taken at the harbour side. They taught the rich, nursed the sick, fed the poor, and offered an easy and complete insurance system as to prospects in the next world. Results, equally happy for all, were achieved by this, for payments proportionate to the suppliant's income.

These are metropolitan examples, with their steep roofs built thinner still from nearness to the houses of the merchants. For true freedom in their expression it is necessary to go much further away than this, into regions where the monastery was the only power in the country and its walls were the capital of a little kingdom. Kings and princes might elect to be buried there, and their ancestors may have founded it, but now it has grown beyond their authority and is a little state in itself.

It is a sacred maze, or beehive, with an abbot in its midst. He is one of themselves, elected out of their number by what would seem to an observer from high above to be as mysterious a choice as that by which, on the death of a queen bee, another ordinary bee out of the community is chosen to be her successor. All the routine of daily life is regulated according to the same unheard and invisible ordination. The lives of the monks are as busily divided; there is the same community of interest; as in a good theatrical company, no "starring" is allowed; everyone has his duties to perform, and he receives no particular praise for doing them. There must be the same mysterious incentive to this incessant labour, for we will count prayer as a part of it, as that which binds the bees to an oath of business and allows them no respite in their lives. They do not procreate, but their number is continually increased. There is an athletic keenness in their search after personal discomfort, but this is contradicted by one end of their labour, which consists in the magnificence of the vessel they have built for their prayers. Here the invisible god dwells in their midst, and is invoked by a formula.

If we want to see one of these communities in its original state, almost, we might say, still at work and with its machinery functioning, we must go to the Spanish Peninsula. Both in Spain and in Portugal the day of ruin only came in the 'thirties of the last century, not quite a hundred years ago. Till then, they had remained untouched, except by the marauding French troops who stole the fine pictures and the gold and silver vessels; but the treasuries are always the least interesting part of the whole, and the architecture has remained nearly intact. In Portugal the monasteries were dis-

solved in 1833, and in Spain they were destroyed by a popular rising two years later. The Spanish Liberals suspected the monks of being strong Carlist partisans; and, as well as this, the old rumours of dungeons, bones and prisoners—white-haired and maniac—chained in their cells, had given birth to a curiosity which was too strong to be resisted. Since that day they have remained untouched, and just as Ottobeuren, or Melk, must be visited in order to realize what things this same system could accomplish less than two centuries ago in Bavaria and Austria, so must the monasteries of Spain and Portugal be seen for an idea of the Gothick principle working in ideal conditions and miraculously preserved, or frozen, for our inspection.

The subject can be restricted into two groups. There are the Catalonian monasteries, and the great monasteries in Portugal. The first group is in the neighbourhood of Tarragona. It consists of the abbeys of Santas Creus and Poblet. The second group includes Alcobaça, Batalha and Thomar, perhaps also Belem.

The interest in the contrast between these two groups is this. The first two of them developed along perfectly normal lines, making a blend between their original Northern origin and the vigorous Spanish environment in which this foreign seed had been planted. The monasteries in the second group, on the other hand, progressed at a furious speed into the middle of the sixteenth century, as though nothing was happening elsewhere. Both groups can be legitimately included in my subject, for they both of them represent the very antithesis of what was coming out of Italy. The first pair of them are the extreme conservatism of the age, developed, as it were, in full rhyme and metre from the

start, while the Portuguese examples are bold innovations, fearless experiments towards new ends. Apart from the Northern, or Burgundian, origin of many of the Portuguese nobles and the Portuguese kings, their isolation on the far Western seaboard of Europe, and their traditional friendship with England, has given to their nation a separate history, unlike that of any other Southern nation, and a character, half Northern and half Moorish, with an absence of any intermediate stages between these two extremes. Prince Henry the Navigator, who was the founder of Portuguese wealth and dominion, was a son of the marriage of John I with Philippa, the daughter of John of Gaunt. The dynasty, then, was half-English and in perpetual communication with England. An access of Northern energy made this small country into a world-power, into the richest kingdom of its day. The Italians were so distant as to have been hardly heard of, and the Portuguese culture pursued its own violent course without any Latin interference.

But, in order to get this contrast, we must begin with Poblet, in Catalonia. It is the largest and most complete specimen in existence of the monasteries of the Cistercian order, now that Cîteaux and Clairvaux are in utter ruin. First of all, some facts about it must be given in order to prove its intrinsic importance. Like all the Cistercian monasteries, one of the main considerations in founding it had been to reclaim new lands for agriculture. All round it there lay different farms, granges and plantations, each one under the direction of a lay-brother, who was at the head of a small community of farm hands, keepers, and other lay-brothers. Among these were La Pena, lying in the middle of lush water-meadows, and Castellfollit, a delicately beautiful name in itself. A splendid

forest was under the charge of the dwellers in this romantic grange. The plain at the extremity of the abbey-lands contained the farms of Milmanda, Mediana, and Riudabella, among vineyards, pastures, and tilled fields.

Poblet had rights and privileges in every important city in Catalonia. It possessed shares in the salt-works of Cardona and in the fisheries of Ampurias, and the rights of pasturage on all Crown lands. Among its manors were the castles and towns of Verdú and Menargues, where previously such families of semi-regal importance as the houses of Urgel and Cervara had held sway. Its daughter-houses were El Tallat, Nazaret in Barcelona, the priory of San Vicente in Valencia, La Real in Majorca, Benifassa, at the joining of the three states of Aragon, Valencia and Catalonia, and the monastery of Piedra in Aragon.

The abbots of Poblet, besides their jurisdiction over their daughter-houses, were Generals of the Cistercian order in Aragon and Navarre, had precedence in the Catalonian Parliament, frequently held the post of Deputy-General of the Kingdom, and were given by Pedro IV the office of Royal Almoner. In this capacity they accompanied the King on his wars, going, for instance, to Italy with Alfonso V when he conquered Naples. The keeper of the monastery archives was notary-royal, the abbot and his monks were dispensed from giving their oaths in the law courts, and their simple word had to be accepted. All castles, towns, and villages belonging to the monastery had the right to fly the royal ensign as a symbol of the king's special protection.

Within the enclosure of its walls, Poblet had every kind of workshop and office, so that having once been accepted as an inmate there was never again any necessity

to come forth from its shadow into the outside world. It is the sacred maze, or sacred beehive, in its most perfected expression.

The founder of Poblet was Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona and Provence and Prince of Aragon, and his original gift of land to the community was in the year 1149. D. Ramon Berenguer had taken Lerida, married Doña Petronella, the heiress of Aragon, and gone to Provence to settle an outbreak of rebellion. There he made a donation of Poblet to the Abbot of Fontfroide, a Cistercian house near Narbonne, in return for which certain monks from Fontfroide, chosen personally by St. Bernard, went to found a monastery at Poblet. The conventual buildings and the church were planned under this prince and under Alfonso II. Abbot Vidal of Fontfroide paid repeated visits to Poblet between 1166 and 1177, so it is evident that Poblet was built under close French supervision. Later on, Pedro IV made the monastery into a pantheon for the kings of the House of Aragon, and the whole importance of the abbey derives from its connection with the kings of Aragon. When this family became merged into kingship over the whole of Spain, and the capital of the country was Madrid, the supremacy of this ancient abbey soon faded. It was no longer the burial-place of kings, and their tombs were uncared for by their more powerful descendants. Even the nobles of Aragon moved away to the court.

Before this, their bones had been buried here beside those of their kings. The houses of Urgel, Cabrera, Moncada, Cervera, Anglesola, Pons de Ribelles, Jorba y Alcarraz, Boixadors, Granyena, Puigvert, Montpaho, Timor, Guimera, Jorba, Rocafort, Alanya, Copons, and Vall-llebrera, all these bearers of Catalan names had their

tombs in the church at Poblet. Indeed, there is no place like it for the study of early heraldry.

Besides the ruined church and its multitude of desecrated tombs, the great beauties of Poblet are the chapter-house and the royal palace of Martin V (1395-1410). The chapter-house is floored with great carved slabs, the tombs of the perpetual abbots. It stands on the east side of the great cloister, and opens by three windows into another cloister with an effect which is a real piece of architectural genius. Apart from this, it conforms to the usual features and has the nine bays and the two double-windows with a door between, which are to be seen in every chapter-house of the Cistercian order.

The royal palace is an affair of the utmost delicacy and precision. Its windows are of a type that is only to be seen elsewhere in Sicily—in Syracuse, that is to say, and in the Gothick palaces of Taormina. Some of them are capped with exquisite sculptures of angels, round-faced and with long golden locks, floating in their shifts, back to back, lute or violin in hand. The two vaulted dormitories of the novices and of the elder monks are in the most marked contrast to this. They are more haunted than any building the eyes have ever seen.

The great arches of their roofs, each one of them making the silhouette of a helmet, sound a scale of ghostly echoes to the footstep. To the novices this must have been their prison, with no hope of release. Long draughts, or sloped ladders of the light, come in at the windows, and often a bird or a bat, whose stupidity in not escaping when all the airs were open to it, was a sarcasm sent to torture them.

But the dormitory of the elder monks was alive with

their own ghostly emanations. It was no company from the world outside, but their own shapes, the peculiar results of the hard, cold life they led, and the strange habits of mind and body that this isolation from everything except their own fellows had brought to them. The vaulted roof must have rung with stertorous breathing, with ceaseless snores, with prayers and secrets mingled together in sleep and betrayed by the lips, with asthma, like a ghostly bellows, plied without ceasing. Sometimes a wind rose up, and it rubbed as though it were a dog against door and window. Or rain fell like a thousand fountains.

The other most utter ruin is the kitchens. The imagination refuses to believe that these were used so little as a hundred years ago. They are on the monolithic scale of a Stonehenge, but burnt offerings of flesh were never seen there, and fruit and vegetables, bread, or a little fish, were the only food from those stone altars, from the hooded fires, and the basins for great cauldrons. These kitchens can hardly have been altered since the earliest years of the monastery; and its decline never changed their size or shape.

Ruin began to come upon the monks, as I have said, when the kingdom increased out of Aragon and the capital of the whole country was Madrid. It was deserted by the kings, but came under the less important protection of the dukes of Segorbe. No more princes were allowed to be buried in the royal sarcophagi, and the coffins of the kings were covered on feast days with scarlet cloths bearing the emblems of the house of Segorbe. This family was of royal decent, and one of them, Pedro Antonio de Aragon, Viceroy of Naples, took the ashes of his ancestor, Alfonso V, from Naples to

Poblet in 1670 and built a tomb for them. This prince was a famous bibliophile and left his library to the monastery. The books from it are all bound in red, with his name and arms in gold upon them. They were scattered far and wide at the destruction of the monastery a hundred years ago, and the discovery of one of them is now a prize in book-collecting. This was the last benefaction that the monastery received, and it decayed slowly for a hundred and fifty years after this, until it was broken into by the mob and was brought by their violence into the state in which it still remains.

The second abbey, that of Santas Creus, is in the same district, not more than thirty miles across the mountains from Poblet. This also was the foundation of D. Ramon Berenguer IV, in the year 1157, but its prosperity was more directly due to the endowment and support of the Moncada family. Building was continued over nearly two centuries, ending, in 1341, with the consecration of the cloister, which had been paid for in large part by Jaime II and Blanche of Anjou. Their arms, the French lilies and the Catalan bars, appear on the Royal Gate at the end of the south walk. The tall church is dark and empty now, but it is of the usual Cistercian type, being, indeed, in all probability, the work of the same French architect from Fontfroide who built Poblet. Its chief interest is the series of tombs that it contains. Chief among them are those of Pedro III and Jaime II. The carved shrine of Don Pedro is carried on a huge porphyry bath, brought from Sicily by his admiral, Roger de Lauria, who defeated the French fleet of Charles of Anjou at Naples. It has much resemblance to the tomb of Frederic II and Constance of Aragon in Palermo Cathedral.

In the cloister there are many more tombs, rich in mediaeval heraldry. They are built into pointed niches that carry the arms of the family of Montelin, stand between twisted pillars bearing the counters of the Moncadas, have the eagles in quatrefoils of the de Selvas, or, above saints in cusped arcades, the stags of the armed knight, D. Ramon de Alemany de Cervello. The customary chapter-house leads out from the cloister; there are the usual hexagonal fountain-house with hexagonal basin, lesser cloisters, and dormitories.

The royal palace of Pedro III and Jaime II is the culmination of the beautiful things in this abbey. In the first court, a stairway, carried on a single pillar of porphyry, leads up to a gallery of pointed arches on slender pillars. These have delicate Catalan capitals, and above there is a painted timber roof. The next court has a third storey, a low loggia of stucco reliefs; in another place a loggia of fine brickwork arches hangs over the wall. The ceilings are timbered, coffered, of artesonado work, or have fine plaster reliefs worked upon them. A whole series of these little rooms leads out of one another, and the monastic atmosphere is altogether broken and dispersed by their secular loveliness.

This is but a threadbare account of these two wonderful Catalan buildings. Their major interest, as I have said, is that they are, in spite of their ruin, the best preserved of all the great series of Cistercian monasteries that flourished once in nearly every corner of Europe. Royal patronage was withdrawn from them in time to leave their original mediaeval form but little touched by later architectural developments. Thus, from a purist's point of view, they are less spoilt than most places of the kind.

At the same time, even in their own day, they were among the most important houses of the order. For Fr. Manrique, the Cistercian historian of his own order, speaks of Poblet as Populetum . . . *toto orbe Christiano nulli secundum.*

Both Poblet and Santas Creus are in a part of Spain which is not much visited, though its situation so near to Barcelona could never be called remote. It is a tract of country which has a remarkable character of its own. Nowhere in the world is fruit-blossom so beautiful as in the orchards of this tract of coast between Tarragona and Valencia. A separate language to that spoken in other parts of Spain is still in use, and everything—people, landscape, and buildings—are neither French, Spanish, nor yet Italian.

A distinct style of mediaeval architecture, quite unlike the Gothick of any other region, was practised here. It is the only indigenous Spanish school, for, apart from this, French or German architects were universally employed. No trace of this particular Catalan school is visible in either Poblet or Santas Creus, but the presence of this talent in their midst goes a great way to explain the interest shown by rich nobles of the time in these two royal foundations. The architect who started the Catalan school was Jayme Fabre, a native of Mallorca, and he built the cathedrals at Palma in Mallorca, and at Barcelona. The immense width of the nave was the peculiarity of his manner, until finally the aisles disappeared altogether and were shown merely by a series of separate chapels. This is the case in the fine Catalan churches of Gerona, Manresa, and Lerida.

The successors of D. Ramon Berenguer were ambitious princes who by the middle of the fifteenth century had

possessed themselves of Naples and Sicily. But their condition of civilization was beyond any doubt in advance of that of these two kingdoms they took over. The Italian culture was in Milan, in Venice, and in Florence, and the Catalans in their own country went ahead along their own lines, not bothering overmuch about what they had seen in Italy. Thus, while Poblet and Santas Creus show little influence of the local Catalan architecture, they are still less perturbed by any rumours from Italy.

It is now necessary to cross over to the other side of the peninsula in order to examine the second group of monasteries. With the exception of Belem, which is in a suburb of Lisbon, all these are near each other in the centre of the country. Batalha and Alcobaça are only a dozen miles apart, while Thomar is not more than thirty miles from either of them.

These convents, regarded often as the bastards of their race, are really among the most imaginative feats of the whole Middle Ages. They are products of an alert, vigorous intelligence resolved to explore the secrets of architecture at a time when this same ideal of adventure had changed a small kingdom into the richest country of its time. The Portuguese, born soldiers and sailors, with good architects and exquisite poets of their own race, were in no need of Italian inspiration, and had set their backs resolutely against the Spaniards. Their own energy carried them forward, till its very excess in proportion to the smallness of the population, with Brazil and Africa and the Indies as the perquisites of a few thousand white men, caused the nervous collapse of the whole race. This ruin was completed by the foolish escapade in Morocco when their King and all their best men

perished, unnecessarily, in this poorest of all the lands they could have chosen for a crusade.*

Till then, the profits of these adventures had been enormous. There was money to spend, and each time it came back in the ships there were new tales told of the lands from which these riches came. It is only natural that out of these three main directions mentioned it should be India that was most interesting to them. Africa was the land of black men; while America (for Mexico and Peru, two ends in themselves, had not, then, been heard of) they thought of only as an approach to India which might take less time to accomplish than the weary journey round the Cape of Good Hope. India was the country of great kings and fine buildings, and it was only out of India that there was any civilization to match their own progress. The Empire of the Moghuls was scarcely established, and it is therefore from the Hindu Kingdom of Southern India that the Portuguese were influenced.†

They had one architectural genius, whose work, until it is seen and the eyes can recognize it, would seem to be a myth. The same suspicious secrecy surrounds their one primitive painter, Nuno Gonçalves, till his two great triptychs in the Museum at Lisbon make him an authentic, powerful person. But Nuno Gonçalves was the true painter of his period, working only in one laborious convention, and reaching in this to the stature, perhaps, of Conrad Witz, or Matthias Grünewald; whereas this

* King Sebastian, and the flower of Portugal, were killed on the battlefield of Arzila in 1578. This was the very scene of his ancestors' triumph, vide Vol. I, p. 130. The mystery of Sebastian's death gave rise to many pretenders, while this battle brought about the ruin of Portugal, which was absorbed by Philip II, of Spain, a couple of years later.

† The Emperor Babar, first of the Great Moghuls, began to reign in 1494.

architect, João de Castilho, has certainly three styles, or manners. There is the flamboyant Gothick of the great doorway at Belem; the Plateresque Renaissance of the cloisters at Belem; and his third, or most personal, stage is shown in the unfinished chapels at Batalha and in the church at Thomar.

His doorway to the church at Belem is in the full Gothick of Rouen. Indeed the sculptures with which it is ornamented were the work of a Frenchman, Maître Nicholas, who is said to have come from Rouen. It is only in the interior of the church that the Portuguese character of the building becomes evident. The great Vasco da Gama had spent the night here, before he started on his voyage of discovery, and it was at Belem that Emmanuel I received him on his return. The King had promised to build a great convent on this spot if the expedition succeeded in its object of reaching India, and he fulfilled his intention by laying the foundation-stone of the future monastery only a few weeks after the explorer's return. This was in 1499, and the convent was begun to the design of an architect Boutaca, but João de Castilho took control in 1517 and worked on it for the next thirty years.

The interior of the church is supported upon two piers and six ornate octagonal pillars, elaborately groined. The peculiar Portuguese character of this Gothick work is very impressive to anyone who has never seen it before. This church seems to contain the material of a whole new school of ideas not yet put into practice, and the sight of the great cloister confirms this impression, while it carries these latent possibilities further than an ordinary imagination could conceive. For the first few moments the horror of ringworm, projected on an unheard-of scale

over the heads of some hundreds of Portuguese orphans, makes any close examination of this amazing affair too painful to be considered. But enthusiasm removes all scruples; and this is the most wonderful conception of a cloister that has ever been realized.

It is a square with blunted corners, and the arcading is double-storied. The Plateresque ornament has a curious quality, for this is Renaissance detail seized upon greedily by a mind which wanted to take over all poetical material that was of any use to him. At the same time, no principles of classical construction have been thought of, and João de Castilho just assumed this new mythology for its fresh stock of ornament. The lovely groining of the stone roof of the lower arcades, the round-headed windows with their carved columns, and the traceries latticing the intervals between these, help the essential square design of the cloister into the form of a well where the sunlight is sifted and made gentle by such an argument of shadows. Its effect must be more beautiful still by moonlight. Altogether it is the most individual architectural caprice that has ever been translated out of the imagination into actuality. Cloisters are the unique glory of Portuguese building, but there is nothing else as beautiful as this, and it is no use trying to describe it in terms of technical practice, for it defies this kind of analysis and is, perhaps, more the possession of the poet or the musician than that of the architect, who will ask too many questions and try to dissipate this incomparable mystery.

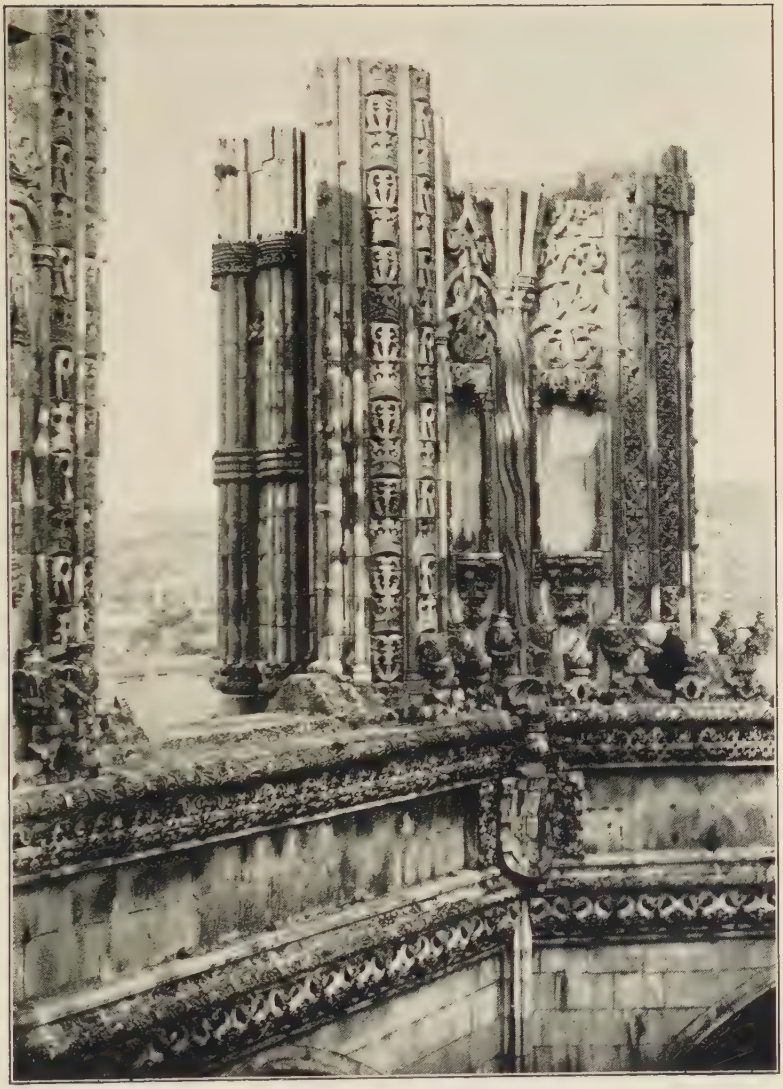
After Belem, the wonders of the three great abbeys in the centre of Portugal can be anticipated, but Alcobaça, which Beckford praises so highly, is the only one of them that falls short of expectation. It is impressive from its

size and from the white bareness of the Cistercian church ; but its great ornament is the pair of doorways by João de Castilho that lead across the corridor between one of the chapels of the ambulatory and the sacristy, which was restored to his designs. These doorways are of great height and are white in colour against the steep whiteness of the corridor-walls. They are the first indication of his Indian, or marine, style. Their pillars are in the form of sea-palms rising out of a rock where their roots mingle with the coral-stems and can hardly be told apart from them. Then the branches from the two pillars curve towards each other and meet, with a little clash of fronds, above the door. It is a conception of the purest originality.

Apart from this pair of doorways, it is not possible to agree with Beckford's opinion of Alcobaça. The extravagance of Batalha and Thomar frightened his own small creative talent. He felt safe with the stream from the river Alcoa that flowed through the kitchen, and with the shifts of nine hundred monks who chanted mass day and night without ceasing.* These were easy, epical effects that matched with the Cistercian simplicity of the church. So, out of Alcobaça, this ordinary average of a monastery, with any quality that it has coming merely from a magnification of its parts, we need only concern ourselves with the two marine doorways by João de Castilho.

The genius of this architect is shown in its origins at the Dominican convent of Batalha. It was always a

* This estimate of Beckford is proved still further by his eulogy of Mafra, the palace-barrack-monastery of the Portuguese Kings, which is again undistinguished except for its size, while the Royal Quinta de Queluz de Baixo, one of the greatest marvels of the Rococo age, Beckford will not trouble to describe, though much of the action of his scenes takes place in it.



BATALHA: UNFINISHED CHAPEL.

By permission of La Sociedade de Propaganda de Portugal.

[*Facing p.* 60.

much smaller affair than Alcobaça, never having more than sixty monks attached to it. The church is of authentic Gothick, with an exterior crocketed and floriated in the richest manner conceivable. The interior has excellent flowing design, with not as much detail as the elaborate sides and façade of the church would seem to imply. The Founder's chapel opens out of the south aisle. This is a high, stone chamber with an octagon roof borne by eight pillars; the arches, the window-tracery, and the bosses to the vaulting of the octagon all having the same kind of minutely beautiful carved detail that is to be found in the chapter-house at Southwell Minster. In fact, this church is built largely upon English models, and the masons and the building-plan were obtained from England through the wife of the founder, Philippa of Lancaster, daughter of John of Gaunt. The name of a master-builder, Houguet, probably an Irishman, Hacket(?), has been preserved as that of the designer of the church. The bodies of Philippa of Lancaster (d. 1416) and of her husband, John I (d. 1434) lie beneath this octagon in a sarcophagus borne upon eight lions. The tombs of four of their children are in niches in the walls.

But the Portuguese character has shown itself in everything that is not part of the actual church. Most particularly is this so in the Claustro Real and in the Capellas Imperfeitas, while it is here that the beginnings out of which João de Castilho built his originality can be seen at work. This cloister can only be compared with that of Belem. Its character is nearly indescribable. The tracery of the arches is based upon two patterns that recur alternately. One of them is an elaborate network of briar-branches, enclosing the armillary spheres

that formed the devise of King Emmanuel; the other is a combination of the double-cross of the Order of Christ with the stem and blossoms of the lotus. These designs are symbolical of the Portuguese attempts upon the Indies. The well-house, at one corner of the cloister, is the most beautiful pavilion imaginable, entered through two very rich archways with the lotus pattern repeated again in front of the eyes in the tracery of the two high windows that look out on to the cloister-garden. Opposite to this pavilion there is a chapter-house of great, if more usual, beauty.

But, strangest of all are the Capellas Imperfeitas. The entrance to them is awkward, as they are not organically connected with the church, but the narrow passage that leads to them ends in a huge archway fifty feet high and twenty-five feet wide. This is elaborately ornamented throughout its surface. It is the most wonderful entrance ever devised by a mediaeval mind, of a general character which is strongly Oriental, but with which no work of Moor, or Persian, can compare.

The chapel is a great octagon without a roof, and its space is surrounded by seven large chapels with six smaller pentagonal chapels in the intervals between them. The great central space was intended by Emmanuel for the body of King Duarte, the son of Philippa of Lancaster, named after the English King, Edward III. The three large chapels facing this magnificent entrance he meant for himself, and for the bodies of Alfonso V and John II.

These chapels only rise to about half their intended height, for when Emmanuel died, in 1521, work upon them was stopped. He had taken it up again at the point where it had been left by King Duarte, some sixty years before. It may be concluded that João de Castilho

was in charge of the renewed attempt to complete this peculiar and ambitious design, but Emmanuel soon lost interest in it and put all his energy into the church at Belem, that he now chose to be his mausoleum. The work at Batalha never progressed very far. The clustered columns of pillars start up again higher, in form like a bundle of reeds, and with an altogether Indian intention. But they never reached even as far as where their capitals should be. The whole scheme remained roofless and unfinished.

In this sporadic building the Manoelino style is seen in two attempts towards its own perfected form, and João de Castilho's isolation as a genius in architectural design is somewhat contradicted by this germination of his ideas. They were latent in the Portuguese mind, and only required development in the hands of someone strong enough to put their theory into execution. This second chance, coming some sixty years after the first suggestion, is an extravagant fulfilment such as is seldom made possible by circumstance. But, in its final state, the Manoelino style must be seen at Thomar.

The Convent of the Order of Christ is on a little hill above the town of Thomar. The order had been founded by King Diniz in 1314 as a military order to fight the Moors, but its days of prosperity came in the next century with the Grand Mastership (1418-1460) of Prince Henry the Navigator. He made use of its revenues to equip vessels for the discovery and conquest of the West Coast of Africa. By the time King Emmanuel had succeeded to the Grand Mastership, in 1480, the possessions of the Order in India and in Africa had made it the wealthiest fraternity in the whole of the Christian world. Soon after his death, and probably because the

Order had become too powerful, its Grand Mastership was merged in the Crown, and the Order was turned from one of chivalry into one of ordinary monkhood. It then rapidly declined in power, lost its possessions, was looted by Junot's troops, was dissolved in 1834, and its ruins only saved from utter destruction by the Count of Thomar who bought it, and whose descendants still use one end of it as their residence, certainly the most deserted and picturesque of all country-houses.

These few details of its history are necessary in order to explain how this remote town, far away on the Western fringes of Europe, can have a building of this extraordinary nature, in a style completely original and outside experience, and on a scale so immense that it contains no fewer than sixteen cloisters.*

The interest of Thomar from our point of view consists in the New Chapter-house, and in the church of the Order of Christ. Both of these were built to the designs of João de Castilho. The church has an ornate doorway, not unlike that of Belem, and the arcading is patterned, as before, with the armillary sphere and with the cross of the Order.

As if to typify the sea-ambition of Prince Henry the Navigator, great stone cables like a ship's ropes are carved on the outside of the church. The doorway is enclosed in an arch, of which the under-curve has an elaborate pendant ornament. Over the door, and within its recess, figures in niches stand under canopies, and upon pillars, in which these and many other devices have been employed. Coiled cables, bossed spirals, floreated pin-

* Among these is the Claustro de Dom João III, a two-storied cloister finished in 1562. It is a magnificent Palladian building, with a fountain in the middle, and is the only fine thing of the strict, full Renaissance in the whole of Portugal.

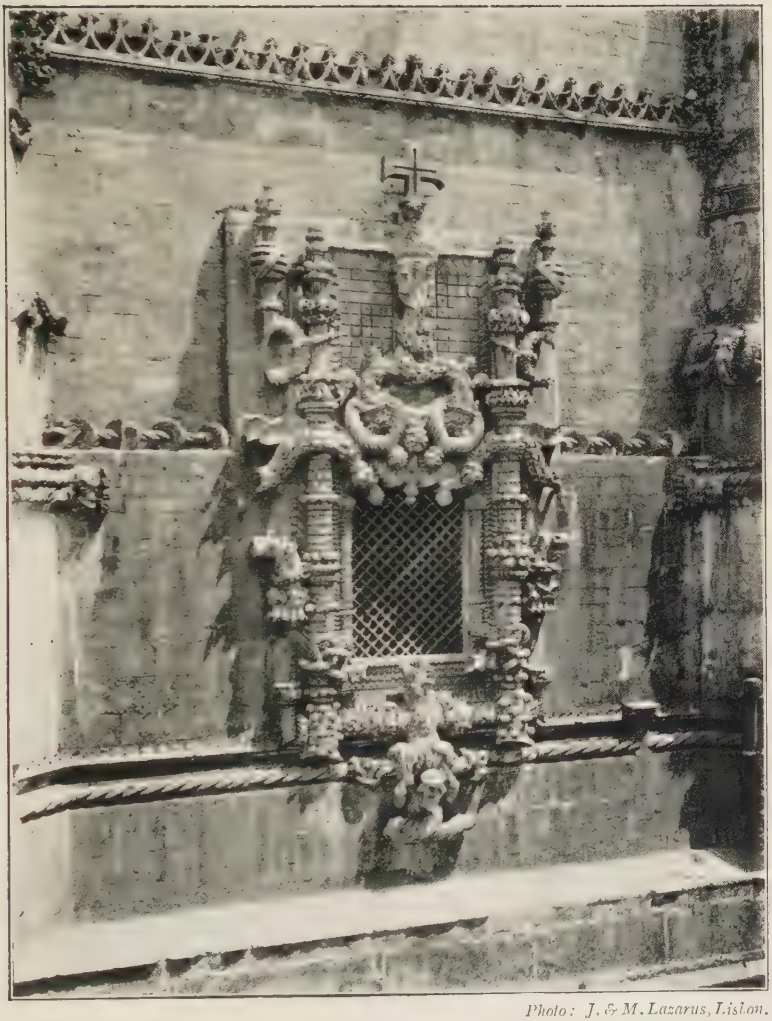


Photo: J. & M. Lazarus, Lisbon.

THOMAR: THE CHAPTER-HOUSE WINDOW.

[*Facing p.* 64.

nacles, armillary spheres, and crosses, stand out in high relief. The lower window, which lights the interior of the choir, is a tangle of outstanding ropes, each point being crowned by the cross and the armillary sphere. Around one of the corner-towers, a great chain, each link carved entire in stone is braced, and around the other an equally tremendous buckled belt, representing the Order of the Garter, which the Prince, who was half-Plantagenet, had been given. The upper window, that lights the chapter-house, presents the extreme of the Manoelino manner. It is a window of great depth worked into the surface of the wall, and represents upon the sloping inner face of the circle a series of bulging staysails, each of them held down by a rope.

Behind this church, and over the rest of the surface of the hill, stretch the endless corridors of the convent with the cells of the monks. At one point, three of these passages meet together in a high domed hall, and six rows of doors can be seen diminishing into the distance. At the end of one of these corridors, in the cloister dos Corvos, live the Conde de Thomar and his family. The flowers and fruit-trees of their garden lie below the barred window, fountains still play there, and voices are heard through the boughs. But, on this side of the window, the ruin is a labyrinth of stairs and vaults. The Abbot's House, the Noviciate, the Refectory, the kitchens, the store-rooms, all of these are empty and deserted. It is an affair of hours to wander through them. The only building to equal it in desolated splendour is the convent of Santa Chiara at Naples, but this is not the place to speak of its majolica cloister trellised with vines, of its refectory painted with perspectives, of its tumbled kitchens, or of any of the other things visible for the first

time only some three years ago, when this immense building, as fine and large as Thomar, but in the midst of the Neapolitan slums, was at last made open to the eyes.* The Convent of the Order of Christ, like the Convent of Santa Chiara, must be seen in order to be believed.

The Manoelino architecture at Thomar is an enlargement in any artist's experience. So are the three other great relics of this style, the cloisters at Belem, and Batalha, and the Capellas Imperfeitas at the latter place. Of all these, the cloister at Batalha is the only one in which João de Castilho was not directly concerned, while at Belem and Thomar the work is entirely his.

There are many more Manoelino buildings in Portugal, but these are the chief. Others may be found at Evora in the Algarve, a little known town which should have much fine architecture, and at Coimbra. This university town is like a mixture of Toledo and Salamanca; it is among the most interesting towns in Europe and has, besides its buildings in this "national" style of Gothick, including more particularly the Claustro do Silencio in the Mosteiro de Santa Cruz, the magnificent Romanesque Sé Velha, or old cathedral, and the University Library, which has a lacquered interior of red, green, and gold, and is beyond any doubt the most beautiful thing of its date, better even than the library of the Hofburg in Vienna, or the libraries of the Baroque monasteries on the Danube.

* There will be another surprise of the same nature if ever the convent of San Gregorio Armeno at Naples is allowed to be seen. Only the church is visible; gardens, cloister, refectory, and chapter-house are in the strictest clausura, but this convent, still preserved in its pristine brilliance, and hidden away in the foulest slums of the town, is one of the greatest works of the late seventeenth century.

Photo: J. Coutinho.

NUNO GONÇALVES. TRIPTYCH (CENTRAL PANEL).
Lisbon Museum.

[*Facing p.* 66.

The impression left by these Manoelino buildings is this. The earlier Gothick of France or England, when the great cathedral-age was over and the Hundred Years War had diminished the energies of both countries, died away and gave place to a small intricacy, a lace-like diapering, without the strength to invent anything but new ornament. The exception to this is the English fan-vaulting. Apart from this, the kind of Gothick that flourished in the district round Rouen added but little to the structural repertory of buildings. Nor is it possible to consider the work of Claus Sluter at Dijon, or the Nuremberg school of Peter Vischer, Adam Krafft, Tilman Riemenschneider, and Veit Stoss, as of more than a very minor importance in the history of art. More particularly in the case of the Nuremberg school, their Gothick is of that obvious, easy sort converted so quickly half a century ago into town-hall or railway station. The continuations of Gothick, where money was at its disposal and the prosperity of new discoveries had fired men's ambition and given them the genius of exploration, was in Spain and Portugal.

But, in Spain, the international character of the monarchy and its contacts with Flanders and with Italy curbed the natural developments of Gothick and invented the Plateresque, a sort of medium between the two, in which the Gothick craftsman could continue to make use of his talent for ornament, increase it by this fresh stock of ideas, and yet not have to learn the new structural system of the revived classics. This sufficed them for their generation.

In Portugal this did not happen, and anyone wishing to see what directions there were still left in which a vigorous mind could advance without going to Rome for

his instruction must see these three or four monuments to Portugal's lost greatness, and should pay particular attention to the works of João de Castilho. In them, the untrammelled Gothick of a race which had still much to say in that medium has reached to its final expression. As well as this, these four monasteries mark the culmination of one whole aspect of the cenobitic life. If we are only concerned with monks to the extent to which they influenced the arts, it must be admitted that in these four instances they had devised a setting for themselves of unparalleled splendour, and as strange in its form as it was fine and finished in detail. One apex of their achievement was reached in Portugal, and if we think of the monastic life all over the world, and not only among the Christian races, most certainly these monasteries take their place beside the monasteries of Mount Athos; the Russian convents of the Troitsa, the New Jerusalem, and the Lavra of Kiev; the Hindu and Brahman temples; the Tibetan lamaseries; the Buddhist temples of Kyoto and Koya-San; the Certosa of Pavia; the monasteries of Bavaria and the Danube. This neutral life led in our midst has produced in Portugal some of the most astounding of its works.

At the other side of the peninsula, Poblet and Santas Creus represent the more ordinary effects, found even in France and in England before wilful destruction overtook them. Alcobaça and Batalha, Belem and Thomar, are very different from this, for their strong and vigorous Gothick was alive some century and a half after its quasi-death everywhere else.

The best contrast to these two groups of monasteries is the town of Burgos. The late Gothick work in this place represents the last expiring efforts of the mediaeval

craftsmen. Two fathers and two sons are responsible for most of it—Hans and Simon of Cologne, and Gil and Diego de Siloe. It was Hans of Cologne who built the Cimborio and the perforated tower-caps of the cathedral; while his son, Simon, built the chapel of the Constable of Castile in the cathedral, and designed the Cartuja de Miraflores outside the town. Of the other father and son, Gil de Siloe made the tombs of Juan II and Isabella of Portugal, and the gilded retablo of the high altar in the Cartuja de Miraflores, while his son Diego built the Escalera Dorada of the cathedral.

A few words must be said about these works. The perforated effects devised by Hans of Cologne give an appearance to the outside of the cathedral as if it were the work of someone who had made a study of the foxglove, the Canterbury bell, and all the other flowers of the Northern woods. As for the chapel of the Constable and the chapel of the Cartuja designed by his son, Simon, they represent the climax of heraldic, aristocratic art. In the roof of the former place the groinings form at their intersection a large star of eight points, and the cells between the ribs of this star are pierced with the most elaborate pounces and floriations. The crowned eagles and the pillars of Spain are supported by "wild-men," the mediaeval satyr, and by figures dressed like the Knave of Hearts off a playing-card. Two other instances of this manner, found elsewhere, the church of San Juan de los Reyes at Toledo and King's College chapel at Cambridge, fall away from any comparison with the buildings at Burgos because of their senseless iteration where the mere manual skill of this decadence has repeatedly copied its own effects and shows none of the fertile invention of Burgos.

The sixteen-sided tomb by Gil de Siloe in the Cartuja is an accepted miracle which no one can dare to doubt. It is the most beautiful of all Gothick tombs. Its plan is a square with another laid diagonally upon it. At the four chief angles are seated figures of the four Evangelists, and round the sides are kings and saints, virtues, nude figures, and wonderful foliage. Above, lie the king and queen; he holds a sceptre, and she is holding an open book. Gil de Siloe also made the monument of their son D. Alfonso which stands against the side-wall. There is a great shield held by angels, with men in armour at either side. D. Alfonso kneels at a prie-dieu under a fringe of leaves, below a sculpture of St. George and the Dragon.

The retablo behind these tombs, made by Gil de Siloe in the short space of three years, is the richest work of applied Gothick in existence. Alfonso and Isabella appear once more kneeling at stools with their coats-of-arms above them. An innumerable crowd of figures compose the design and culminate in a great circle made of clustered angels, in the centre of which is a great crucifix underneath a figure of the Pelican vulning her breast.*

The son of this great artist, Diego de Siloe, before he had entirely accepted the classical manner and had left Burgos for Granada and Malaga to undertake the new Christian works built there after the expulsion of the Moorish Caliphs, put up, in 1519, the Escalera Dorada, a great double flight of fifty-nine steps, leading down to the north transept from the Puerta de la Coroneria on

* The small Gothick church of San Nicolás, just above the cathedral, contains another retablo, by Francisco de Colonia this time, nearly as splendid as that of the Cartuja.

the hillside above. This is a magnificent example of the Plateresque, with its worked and gilded railings and with the balustrades jutting out, as they reach the pavement, into two stone griffins. It is just at the transition between the two ages and bears predominant signs of the new civilization come in from Italy. It has just emerged from the Gothick, but left it in these other splendid works that have been described, in an elaborate fringed, or German, leafiness of thought, transplanted into the soil of Spain and forming a last flowering of those old principles into action. Unlike the Portuguese buildings, the last stage of an alert and busy decadence had been reached; no more elaboration of effect, on only these lines, was possible, and after this climax fatigue and deadness would have ensued had not these new items come into the stock of the craftsman and the ornamenter.

Gil de Siloe is by far the most interesting of this quartet of architects and sculptors who endowed the town of Burgos with their handiwork. The Cartuja, because of the tombs and the retablo made by him, is a supreme instance of the licensed, academic Gothick in its last phase of existence when intricacy of handling only suited it for the enrichment of small areas. The aristocratic, ascetic nature of the Carthusian monks took a particular delight in this contrast to their bare cells and this reminder of the luxuries they had known and relinquished. Indeed, the Cartuja is but the first of a whole series of buildings embodying these same principles but carried out more often in the baroque, which was quicker, if no less expensive, in reaching its effects. Chief among these are their monasteries at Jerez de la Frontera, at Granada, at Pavia, at Pisa, at Padula in the Basilicata and on the hill of San Martino above Naples, at all of

which places their wealth contrived some most surprising and original inventions.

Here, in the Cartuja de Miraflores, these white-robed monks, who bear an exact resemblance because of the date of their style of dress with the Moors of Atlas, say their prayers in front of this vertiginous retablo, which is so crowded with little figures thrusting themselves into the first plane of vision and with their less important and less richly-garbed fellows standing in rows behind them, that we are audience at the last scene of some great theatrical ballet. A perpetual grand finale has been achieved, and, as in the masques of two hundred years ago, many, or most, of the figures are in the air on wires.

The mandorla of clustered angels, who surround and support the crucifix under the figure of the Pelican vulning her breast, is the climax of this emotional affair. Its effect can be described in no terms but those of music, and I can think of no musician but Tchaikowsky who could parallel the hysterical cyclones and their alternation of brittle calm, as of patterns of the frost, or leaves shown in water. This is the characteristic of his orchestration, where, if the brass is not playing in four-part harmony, the woodwind and the strings echo themselves in a series of reflections of their action. Such is his procedure in his best moments, in the "Casse-Noisette," or in the scherzi of his symphonies, and there is nothing except these to compare with the infinitely laboured, yet delicate and direct, emotionalism of this great retablo. It is one of the most personal moments in the whole of Gothick history, and in this small chapel of the Cartuja we find ourselves in front of one of the most singular and gifted men of his race. Its delicacy, and the more deep than broad loudness of its climax, are considered for a

small audience who had to pass their whole lives in front of it. The mob-public of a cathedral had to be planned for in a quite different direction, but this monastery was a place where the same few people came day after day and many times in each day. It must be something they would not tire of, with an emotional force to sustain the spirit, and a minuteness of detail that always left some corner unexplored and lying fresh to be examined. Or the whole structure hung there before short-sighted eyes as a mist that allowed no one to know its secrets who would not draw near to it.

Burgos, and the works of art that it contains, are within the experience of nearly every traveller, whereas these two groups of monasteries that I have described are nearly unknown. But, together with Burgos, they represent the Gothick art of the monks in three definite stages of their end. With Poblet and Santas Creus it is the art of the great convents in a countryside that belonged to them ; in fact, they were little walled states containing everything necessary to their support. With the Cartuja de Miraflores, it is a rich monastery, but of small size, with a church no bigger than a little chapel, lying outside a town where the greatest sculptural and architectural activity was in progress.(7) With the group of Portuguese monasteries the situation is different, and there is an opportunity of following the Gothick into regions where it need never have died, having unlimited wealth and a vitality not contradicted by any cross-current of ideas.

In all three places the monks have arrived at the most intense ornamentation of their principles, and, as I have stressed before, it is this side of monastic life and not its prayers or hardships that we want to investigate. These few short hours of their existence, compared with all the

hours of prayer, of sleep, and the time they passed locked in their cells, made them into the greatest patrons, and practitioners, of the arts. Had there been nothing but monks, and had the human race been preserved by a parthenogenesis of the spirit, bearing men and women into the world again after they had been taken away from it for five centuries, we should still have a most imposing record to chronicle. Indeed, the aim of this chapter is as though this were so.

Unfortunately the later labours of the Carthusians lie outside the scope of this enterprise, so that our investigation must stop at the Cartuja de Miraflores. Nor may we follow the Gothick any further in its Spanish developments ; into the strange heraldic rhapsodies, for example, of a town like Valladolid. This has two churches, San Pablo and the Colegio de San Gregorio, which are literally festooned with coats-of-arms, held by angels, by knights, or by " wild men " ; the former of these has a genealogical tree over the doorway and a pair of cloisters of an almost Manoeline strangeness ; while a third church, La Magdalena, has a façade consisting simply of one gigantic heraldic achievement. We must keep away, too, from Salamanca, from the façades of the Catedral Nueva and the University with their incomparable richness of the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, and from the Casa de las Conchas, another instance verging on the Manoeline. Last, and saddest of all, our monastic burden bars us from the palace of the Infantados at Guadalajara, the work of the Flemish brothers Enrique and Juan Guas who built the church of San Juan de los Reyes at Toledo. The courtyard of this palace, and the ceilings in some two or three rooms, more especially the Sala de los Linajes, or genealogies, with its carved and

gilded cornice, its statued ancestors looking down from balconies like the Gothick boxes of a theatre, and the Moorish and stalactitic splendour of its ceiling, are things, hardly known, but of a beauty that drives away any of the more familiar achievements of the fifteenth century elsewhere in Europe.

We must put away all these inspirations and think only of the communistic tribes of monks at work in all the fair valleys that their thwarted comfort chose for them. Their pace was so slow that nothing ever seemed to happen, and any change that came was so long delayed that once it had arrived it was not much noticed. Their centuries last us a minute.

Now, their dull, pained lives seem to us to have been peaceful and almost idyllic from the realization, one after another and in their due rotation, of every scheme that their imagination suggested to them. Time and money they spent freely, having unlimited store of each of these necessities. By no other means but this could such effects have been achieved, and in this present age, more than in any other, is the need for these things becoming obvious and even pressing. No other method can secure such results, and yet the rebirth of these instincts is impossible and can never come about, so that civilization is now for ever doomed to the individual effort—almost, even, to the amateur, since there is hardly an artist in the last sixty years who has been able to earn his living. Under the monastic system anyone who did not like fighting, and had no desire, on the other hand, to be a merchant, found himself safely provided for; and it is exactly this class of person who is likely to supply the arts for his country. A naïf simpleton like Fra Angelico could have existed in no other condition than this.

The first sculptors, the first painters, and the first scholars, had their unprofitable labours guaranteed to them. But, also, men of inferior talent found no encouragement, and if there were a hundred monks to any one of them whose endowment was worth while, at any rate there were not ten thousand bad painters to a single mediocrity. It is the greatest thing to be said in favour of the monastic system that, if they encouraged true talent, nothing at all was done to help the idle dabbler.

Nothing could be more false than to imagine that the cloistered life was lacking in what can only be termed "motif" and that there was no inspiration except a bunch of flowers, or a chance lizard seen on the summer wall. Far from this being so, there can be no doubt that everything gained from the dramatic force that was given to it by constant repetition at stated periods not coming too near together. Even a footfall in the passage had a symbolical power as overwhelming, if less dangerous, as the tread that the prisoner waits for, expecting his death to come with it.

Then it passed by and was gone ; and it can never have been anything else but the regulation shoes of the monk, either the humble sandal, or that heavier version of the dancing-shoe that they wore, black in colour like that happier omen, and with the white sock of the comedian showing under the equivocal skirt.

But this was all. At other times footsteps made their regular round carrying food. They came to each cell in turn, going back again after every fall of the lattice, so that there were a known number of journeys to be made before and after your cell was reached. Perhaps these latter variations were felt more than counted, for

the little routine pleasures of the rule made it a delight to finish everything in the exact quantities in which it was brought, as though this very act was part of the dramatic action. This was one degree of duty, and by now those footfalls were silenced and there was an appointed time during which nothing was to happen. But the very silence was moving in an ordered direction towards the next ordained event, and the heat or cold, the rain or snow, of these intervals had been regulated by the same code of laws, allowing only for a wider pattern for the theme to move in, so that a hazard seemed to attach itself to these really fixed changes of the elements.

Nor were the communal, apart from the solitary, phases of this existence less emphatic in their appeal to the senses. Often there was silence in the refectory while some holy work was read aloud from a pulpit high in the wall. Or it was a feast-day of the church and the gift of tongues had descended upon the diners. Then, it was as though these men, whose lives were separated from each other only by a few inches of wall, met here at certain days in the calendar having passed the intermediate time in a round of furious travelling. Nothing, save such mutations of the mind and soul, could account for their gabbling hurry of talk.

The forced marches in the cloister were another most curious spectacle from the different degrees of acting and behaviour possible under the strict uniformity of the monk's cowl. Some struggled round, beaten down by their load of conscience, others walked in strings of four or five, or in familiar pairs, busily talking. There were some who came into this light of day, into this publicity with their fellows, as though reluctant to leave

the darkness of their locked cells, with puzzled step and eyes yet blinking with the light; while many others lived only for this seldom recurring day and were disappointed with it when it came from too great an anticipation of its liberties.

Scenes just as strange and forced as these were acting in every corner of each huge barracks of the self-willed eunuchs. They may be imagined, too, working in the fields or vines, driving a cart and horse, or, oddest of all, rowing a boat of provisions with a long oar from a high rowlock, as may be seen to this day on the way to the convent of S. Francesco all' Deserto across the lagoons of Venice.

Within the enclosure of the walls we may think of them coming out of the cellar-mouth from a parliament of great barrels, or sitting to wait for their turn in the barber's shop. Here they came, in some places, twice a week to be shaved and to have their tonsures attended to; while, in the strictness of the Cistercian rule it was the custom to be bled profusely at certain intervals in order to lower resistance and meet temptation with too little strength to follow its cajoleries.

In the chapter-house the general of the order, or a visiting abbot, would be received, and the impersonal affairs of the community were discussed and decided upon. From here the edicts of each fast were promulgated, and offenders had their confessions examined and were told their punishment. This took the form of a yet more stringent privation, so that the most devout of the monks, and those who never committed any offence, were in the process of perpetually punishing themselves for things they had not done.

The usual conspiracies among themselves which always

break out when people are thrown together were not so true of fact as in any other kind of community of human beings; for, though the monks passed a greater portion of their lives together in a propinquity as close as that of camp, or prison, they were barred from nearly all contact with their fellows; and even in the less strict orders, where refectory and dormitory put life into terms of common or mutual experience, they were their own jailers in their own self-appointed prison and could be depended upon to enforce the most drastic interpretation of the code. Thus, the most direct approaches in dramatic action were lacking in their lives, since the passions had no play, and we must take away intrigue and subterfuge and put in its place the shallow, quickly noted peculiarities that habit induces when every happening of life has become settled into a rhythm which nothing breaks or disturbs. Then, idiosyncrasy rises out of the dullness to relieve its monotony, though it must seem to the individual inventor of each trick merely to be a system of doing things quicker and easier, a saving of trouble and a short road to what is necessary and expected.

This rich theme, and all its workings and changes, comes out of that drab, or black, start; with, at its farthest possibilities of expression, the plain white of that aristocratic variety, or the magpie division of the Dominicans, conceived by the Spanish saint to indicate the pied, or mongrel, humility of his followers. But they are the only alternative to the glittering, spangled chivalry of the age; their history was safer and more continuous, and their achievement in its vastness cannot be compared with the castles of the knights, and with the tapestry, or poetry, made to please them.

The great and apparent permanence of the cenobites suffered but few darts of sentiment to shake in its sides. All its incident was too carefully planned to shut out this possibility. Regret was not allowed to be a part of penitence. At the same time, no power could keep away every feeling of this kind, and, in itself, the soft dove-throat of the sky was enough to cause a trembling of the senses.

The fruit-trees made the only clouds there were, and these were shaken continually by a sigh of wind, or by a bird leaving one of these islands for another. Then, and because of this gentle playing of the air on those coloured coasts, everything except their message became worthless and hollow. The horrible yawning prison loomed behind, with a doubtful heaven at the end of it, and, if there, only to be enjoyed by a continuation of the same rigid rules into immortality, surrounded by the wan, graceless athletes and militants who made life ugly in the convent. This spell of a few days would be gone in a moment, and the only way to enjoy its beauties was to keep absolutely still as though listening to every sound. This is how creation begins in the poet's mind, when things, seen only with the eyes or touched with the fingers, become changed into voices which speak their words into the brain. The gradual darkening of each day, delayed a moment longer every time, let all the ghosts escape from their cob-webbed corners, and from their green cabinets in the woods, that now built themselves again, leaf by leaf, branch by branch, towards the summer.

During its burning days and torrid nights only the cool snow or rain could be thought of, but when the light began to shorten once more, the same longings but with a different form to their expression will have loaded,

since they could never be realized, the mind of any monk who was not as stony-hearted as his prison.

The morning came in mist. It hung like smoke in the high branches of the trees, and had come down lower at every alley through the woods. It started from the ground at a step, and felt dank and acrid in the lungs. Soon the sun began to draw it up through the branches and none of it was left, except in a corner under high rocks, or where any long view through the trees left some traces of mist along the avenue.

Far away, down the distance, came the winding of a horn.

There was nothing else, no figures could be seen, but it sounded once more, and so far away that its direction was difficult to tell. Immediately, the different world that was the alternative to this built itself before the eyes, but now it was too late. The distance, up to where the hunting-horn was blown, seemed immeasurable, and by the time it was reached there would be no trace left of it. They would be at the far edge of the wood on their way to some castle where they could not be followed.

And so this autumn day when the hunting-horn was heard made the last sadness before the bitter winter, when it was too cold to have any regrets, or to think of anything but an alleviation of its pains. Meanwhile, the knights and ladies were hunting every day, and to anyone not a prisoner at a definite spot, the horns and the horses' hoofs could be heard wherever their fancy took them.

II

THE FAIR-HAIRED VICTORY

NEW palaces in peacock marble rise on every hand and the chequered pavement has been sprayed with water and freshly strewn with flowers. A fringed canopy, or tented passage, leads across it and the empty background seems to wait for figures. It is not easy to people this childlike paradise except with the children who would delight in it, but the builders cannot keep away for long from its conscious pride of newness, the church bells ring, and a gentle amorous fanfare announces the shadows thrown by the early morning.

They walk, two by two, in meadowed dresses, with fair hair falling to their shoulders, or built into the towers and sails of fashion. There are no drums and trumpets to marshal them. The happy adolescence of their stride moves in time to the sweeping of harp-strings, and to chords touched again and echoing. Harps, and the plucked strings of this music, suggest sails ruffling in the wind, the smooth neck and blown mane of the horse in his speed, with the clean sands that would be true of both images. Here, the morning air is just as fresh as this, the marbles shine and sparkle as though spray from the sea had reached to them, while the blue waters of the sky show not a sail upon their emptiness.

It is the world of the cassone panels, and the painters

of these marriage-chests imagined many another scene where the fair hair of the North lit the fields, shone like gold out of the green woods of spring, or burnished the hill-crest when a full moon climbed half into the sky and such beauties as a preened cypress standing sentinel, or an antlered stag breaking that round mask with its points, could be seen in this magic half-world between two days.

Sometimes the dead legends of the past were revived for once more, and their actors were painted with the gay colours of the North. Andromeda is bound against the rocks, and the painter has answered both riddles of the Gothick age, for her knight is shown in his full panoply of armour, such as a stranger who only saw him in his ordinary clothes would require of him in order to satisfy the rumours of iron men riding out of the mists, while Andromeda is painted naked, as if washing to shore in a shell of pearl, and this answers the mystery of what things were hidden beneath the folds and pleats of the ladies' gowns.

Or, again, it is some other episode with only two actors to its story. A daisied field is the scene for this, and all the action is at one end of it, where a little brook sings in the sunlight. The arms of Daphne, held up as she runs, are already turning into branches. Her fingers have lost their tapering ends and have assumed, in terror, the sprouting leaves of the spring wood that she hoped to reach for cover. She does not want to vanish out of sight, but only to be something that can be touched by him and not given any injury. She must be one among a myriad trees, and must cling to just that chance of being passed by him; or he may even pause by her green sleeves and the gold tresses of her highest

leaves, while he listens for a footfall and hears nothing but the sighing boughs, and whispered words whose meaning he cannot catch.

But she is too late in her metamorphosis. Her pursuer is leaping over the brook, with his hair blowing into a red mane behind him, and he will reach to her side when she has lost her human shape. For him, also, it is too late, and her last change is in his arms ; her dying breath cools him while the gold locks of her hair turn into screws and twists of yellow wood like the shavings upon the floor of a carpenter's shop. She is sadly imprisoned in this ghostly shape, but can never escape from it again, and is immortalized in a condition just that distance away from death that he would have reached to her in life if she had fallen in the meadow and lain fainting in his arms. So she misses his hot breath, and the pulsing of his heart that she would have heard, and he has lost the rescuing of her shape from the tree into which she was turning, and the recovery of her eyes, her hair, and her hands.

Sometimes it is a battle of the Centaurs. This is among green hills and serious woods. The cornfield is a solid honeycomb, with paths cut waist-high through its richness, and this was too beautiful a thing for the painter to allow his harvest to be trampled, and so its summer peacefulness is left untroubled by the fighting. The death of any one of the warriors would be just as sad, yet many of them are stricken and lie dying. They have no armour, save a shield, and their fair heads and naked legs are as they would be in schools among the myrtle-groves, in contests of poetizing, when making love in the soft shadows, or in any contingency except this, of death. It does not matter. Here they are fixed in

an immortality that is incorruptible and that does not allow them to grow old, or even suffer the harvest to be cut.

Another time, it is the legend of Perimedes the blacksmith. His forge is like a fiery cave where the flames sing madrigals in place of the dripping melodies of the damp, so it is a more cheerful place than ever a cavern can be with its stalactites that toll their age away in steady tears. The Centaurs thump in here as loud as a troop of horse, and their voices, as they speak to Perimedes, come from high up, from a taller stature than that of any man. Their faces are lit by the flames of the forge and Perimedes lets his irons go cool and shares his dinner with them.

In other panels they are to be seen coming away from their discourse with the blacksmith and standing at the cave-mouth, nosing the wind, and listening for the sounds it brings from the valley beneath. All their history, and every known fact about them, are made use of.

The Centaur that Pliny saw, embalmed in honey and brought from Egypt, lies like a curious statue in a mass of amber. Its hair and beard are golden, clearly seen through the opaque liquid that preserves them. So the Centaurs are given the fair hair of the North and made as ruddy as the pupils whom they teach. These youths, fresh from the glades of philosophy, are shown the use of the bow, some of the arts of war, and are, perhaps, counselled in the heavier and more galloping metres of poetry by the learning of the Centaurs. But also the Centaurs are shown in their troubles with Hercules.

When Hippodamia married Pirithous, his neighbours, the Centaurs, having drunk too much wine at the marriage-feast, offered violence to the women who were

there. This irritated Hercules, Theseus and the rest of the Lapithae, who rescued their women, defeated the Centaurs, and forced them to retire into Arcadia. This was only half of it.

Their insolence was punished a second time by Hercules, who went into Arcadia to hunt the boar of Erymanthus. Here the Centaur Pholus gave him wine to drink, which was the property of the rest of the Centaurs, but had only been allowed to them on condition of their treating Hercules with it whenever he passed through their territory. They resented the liberty that Hercules took with their wine and attacked him with uncommon fury. The hero defended himself, and his adversaries fled for safety to the Centaur Chiron. Chiron had been the preceptor of Hercules, and they hoped that he would desist in his presence. But Hercules, though awed at the sight of Chiron, did not desist, and in the midst of the engagement, wounded his preceptor in the knee, who, in his excessive pain, immediately changed his immortality for death. The death of Chiron irritated Hercules and made him still angrier, and all the Centaurs present were extirpated by his hand. Indeed, but few escaped this common destruction.

All through these scenes Hercules is a fair-bearded giant, a prophecy, in fact, of the Farnese Hercules, who was to be found half a century later in the dust of Caracalla's Thermae. The Centaurs are the same, and are thus portrayed through all their histories, starting at their very origin, which is given, and painted, variously, as the fruit of Ixion's adventure with a cloud in the shape of fair-haired Juno, or more simply, as the procreation of the Centaurs themselves (thus their continuance and not their birth is explained) with the mares of Magnesia.

However this may be, both Hercules and the Centaurs are credited with the fair hair that is my theme, and which we may attribute, in the case of the Centaurs, either to the encounter with a sunlit cloud, its snow being metamorphosed into breasts and limbs belonging to that morning forehead, or to the glistening coats of the mares that had been rubbed, so it seemed, with gold dust.

So universal and uncontradicted is this truth, that it is difficult to find a single figure out of a cassone panel given the dark colouring of the Italians. The ubiquitous gold has triumphed everywhere, in contemporary scenes, and in legends, secular or religious. Nowhere, in this poetry of the house and street, is there one exception to this canon of beauty, and such typical and multitudinous evidence must be accepted in its assertion of what was admired.

Often a tournament has been chosen for subject, and the pages who hold their master's equipment, and who, alone, are not in full panoply of helmet and visor, show the same long heads of yellow curls that are credited to the heroes of Greek legends, to angels fluttered out of the sky, and to youths and maidens walking against the fruit-like domes and lily towers of the town. For this is essentially, at its present stage, the art of Florence and of her subject cities, so that the clean angles of her new buildings and the freshly realized beauties of her hills are never far out of mind, and come into any legend, or any reality, that is pictured.

New bricks and new woodwork with the grain still showing, are two of the most typical things in the spick-and-span, naïf art of Fra Angelico; and most certainly it would be impossible to question this painter's preference for the fair-haired Northern races. So now

that smaller world of the cassone panels has been left behind for the great and serious art, of which it was the outcome, and, making a beginning with the mere mention by name of this pious and tranquil genius, we find his ideals of physical beauty in association, always, with an earth that was being reshaped and rebuilt. The Gothick branched into strange leaves and flowers from his hand; palm-trees and wild-flowers that never grew in the North, and that can only have existed in Kingdoms washing in seas of poetry, in Cyprus or the Counties of Little Asia, grow in his pictures by the side of buildings that have already a hybrid, suspect foreshadowing of change about them. In his figures, not even the beginnings of maturity are in sight, and he paints them as children and not even adolescents, so that none of the curves and bends of beauty are noted and they have only an appealing pathos, without any of the dangerous irritation and enticement that a little flight of time will put into their limbs and faces.

Such changes are already arrived in the figures painted by his pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli, and they are helped still further by his exquisite inventions of trees and hills. The cypress and the pine-tree in a hundred forms break the airs. The flame, or plume-like, male, and the ragged women that make the sexes of the cypress, stand in their groups by pine-trees shaped like a cloud above a crater and as flat and steady as the column of a stylite. Nard and cassia travel down the gales, or must lie, so still are most of the days, in little places where they can always be breathed, so that this certainty might be marked for fair weather on a map. White oxen, yoked together in their pairs, by love as well as duty, tread slowly down the hillside looking before them with lustrous, calm eyes and

scenting in their nostrils, if not those spices of the grove, at any rate the warm smell from the bean-fields. Or perhaps it is autumn, when the candle of day has dwindled down to lessened hours and the vines are hung with grapes.

In the distant green valley lie a dozen towns, unless they stand on hills that are bent round into a crown above the horizon. The procession riding through the fresco is a journey of some hours away from any town, and they pick their way carefully through the rocks giving every opportunity for the noting of their richly elaborate dresses. Many of the riders, even, can be recognized, and so their dark hair and burnt features are truthfully given, but whenever children are painted by him, or he is given any latitude for his fancy with angels, heavenly lute-players, young pages, or the blonde daughters of the tyrant, they are painted with the fair hair that was by now the tradition of every beautiful legend.

This is the character of his frescoes in the Riccardi palace, in that wonderful dust-obliterated series at Pisa, and in the box-like compartments into which he poured his poetry at the church of San Gimignano. His art may be also seen at the Umbrian town of Montefalco, which I have never visited, and in an illuminated Livy of the Riccardiana Library at Florence. This must be of extraordinary and rare beauty, and in its probability of trees and flowers should be compared with the miniature-paintings by the Persian artist, Bihzad, that were mentioned in an earlier chapter of this book.

The loosening of those classical prose columns of Livy, formed by neat habit like the folds induced by continual wear in a familiar toga, into the wooded hills and terraced vales of Benozzo must be among the strangest transitions of art. The legionaries, turned by the antiquity of their

deaths into as many pale statues, lose their stone, forbidding calm and take on the adolescent graces of this idyllic spring. They are made of the earliest and natural poetry of the Mediterranean, but have been painted with the colours of the North. They are few in number, compared with the armies of Roman fact, and their battles are in woods where there are never more warriors than the trees they fight among. This is at a hazard, for I have not seen the manuscript, but imagination pitches their pavilions for me, and all the panoply of serious war, that was associated inevitably in the minds of that time with memories and reports of Crusading armies, shapes itself into Gothick armour. The cedar branches stir with trumpets, rabbits run for their tunnels, and the cloudless day lies more still than ever ; but it is only the silence in which poetry is born, and it is this, and not these tragic truths, that interested the painter. To him, Livy was no historian, and we can part from this invisible book with the assurance that he made those dead pages into a flowering paradise where everyone was young.

By now, the supremacy of this physical type in the imagination is firmly established, and, indeed, its opposite of the normal Italian darkness is usually made use of whenever the forces of evil are portrayed, or this world of idylls has room for a villain to spoil its peace and endanger its safety. Then, the fullest contrast is in this casting of the rôles, and the Gothick type coming out of the uncertain mists of the past is called upon to play the most important part in myths that held a very present and contemporary truth to their beholders.

The most beautiful form that it was possible for the mind of the painter to imagine, or for his hand to make

alive, comes to shore from the summer sea. Her bark is a cockle-shell that rides upon the waves so that their lapping in the fluted rills of the shell can be seen. There is a strange wind in the picture, not strong enough to cool the day, which does not need it in any case, so mild is the hour, and this is made visible by the inevitable manner in which every wave brings the shell nearer to the coast of sand, and by the disposition of the flowers, dropped out of the air, and all blowing with one accord in her direction and toward the shore. She is naked, and her fair hair, braided into a long tress, climbs over her shoulder, falls between her breasts and reaches with its golden strands into her fingers. This was the beauty of the antique world risen out of the sea and come to earth once more. It was a symbol that such things had lived before and that they could be born again.

Not far inland there is an orange-wood, and among its trees the young men and girls are celebrating the sacred rites deduced from this arrival upon their shore. The spring gale, a little brusque and inconsiderate in its strength, is personified and blows down with distended lips upon the scene. There is not one Venus, but several, and three of them, the fair graces, dance hand in hand through the trees. Another maiden, with her lover running after her, shakes the fruit and scatters the blossom no less violently than that figure of the wind. But more than this must not be said of the picture; the persons playing in the legend are all characters from the greatest age of the Mediterranean man, and my theme must not break down, out of its intention just to stress upon the inevitable fairness of the types chosen by the painter, into a long thesis upon that Florentine world.

It will only be necessary to mention one more picture by this unrivalled genius, and this, being a Christian and not a pagan subject, will prove that the same physical principles were true of both sides of his talent. This picture has a most extraordinary quality of surface approaching the finest lacquer in richness. The interest of it lies in the young girls who simulate angels and hold up, or pull apart, the curtains at the back of the picture. It must be admitted at once that their faces are the most beautiful ever immortalized in this manner, and that they represent what is surely the highest point ever reached in the physical development of the white races, just as certainly as they were chosen from the loveliest children of the greatest age of European art. The form and colouring of this Gothick type has now altered out of its straight strictness, and its pale, or too roughly red, hue of skin, into all the benefits that a genial sun and the blessings of poetry and the arts can give it. From this summit of every beauty of the mind and body nothing but a decadence could follow, and we cannot expect to find the chronicle of such perfections belonging to any other race, or time. It was attained but once, lasting, apparently, only for the childhood of a generation. Already, the hintings of a dangerous heterosexual future are evident, particularly in the young armoured saint in the foreground of the picture, for it is difficult to tell whether he is a boy or girl, and, indeed, his appearance is most easily explained as a boy pretending to be a girl dressed as a boy. His armour shows with intense realism out of the impasto of the picture, and difficult adventures of the spirit lie ahead.

The same traits and the same leanings of nature are to be found in the stern, dry art of Signorelli. He has

left only one secular picture, the Pan and Apollo, now in the gallery at Berlin. The goat-god, crowned with the crescent moon above his shaggy hair, sits on a rock with his pipes held ready to play. A naked woman, playing a long shepherd's reed that stretches nearly to the ground, stands beside him, and the naked figure of Apollo is between them with his white back and pale limbs making a contrast with the darker body of Pan. It is a very early morning, lit by both sun and moon, and so new and old in this joining of those two forces of light that this ghostly mythology has an almost probable reality. This is one of the most beautiful paintings ever conceived by mortal mind and of a poetical force and originality that surpasses the powers of description. The painter has wisely chosen, not a wood but a lonely valley full of rocks for his scene; the sort of deserted solitude that only a shepherd could ever know.

There are many naked figures in the background, standing or sitting in positions that the nearness of a river deep enough for bathing in would suggest. They tie, or untie, their sandals, stay still for the air to dry their bodies, or are tired and stretch their limbs, but sleep lies not behind them but ahead of them, for the dawn is their day and the steeper hours hide them and keep them invisible. The heads of fair hair that have been traced all through this history are equally true of this picture, but they are associated with a darker, burnt colour of the limbs. Indeed, in their physical type these figures bear the suggestion that they were taken from the companies of Landsknecht that wandered and fought over Italy in the time of Signorelli. Their fair hair is bleached, as only hair of Teutonic, or Nordic, paleness will bleach, in the strong rays of the Italian sun, and their bodies are

blackened in the same unaccustomed manner, as of foreign bathers on an Italian strand. The same thing is true of the naked bodies of the youths that were his excuse and motive for painting the Madonna in the Uffizzi.

Even in his frescoes from the life of St. Benedict, in the cloister of the monastery of San Oliveto Maggiore, the young knights in armour are not of the expected type. It might be imagined that they would approximate to the ordinary Umbrian personality, to the pert, bustling pages in piebald hose, with yellow hair falling to their shoulders and a feather in their caps, as painted by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo in his set of eight panels at Perugia from the life of San Bernardino of Siena. Instead of this, they are of the same marked Teutonic type. They were the only thing that interested Signorelli in these frescoes, for his groups of white Olivetan monks lack any dramatic force and were difficult protagonists on whom to build up an imposing and severe drama. For this reason, only some two or three out of the ten frescoes painted by Signorelli can be said to really show his powers to their full advantage.

The uniforms of his warriors are almost exactly of the date and style of those still worn by the different city-wards of Siena at the celebration of the Palio, but their heads and features are of distinctly Nordic type, fiercely shaved, and alertly loud in bearing. Of the two finest frescoes in this magnificent series, one shows St. Benedict discovering the trick played upon him by Totila, King of the Goths, who, in order to test the saint's wisdom dressed up his shield-bearer, Riggo, in his royal armour and insignia and sent him at the head of a great retinue to visit St. Benedict. The saint at once saw through this trick and ordered him to drop his disguise, a feat of

perception that struck Riggo and his companions with terror and astonishment. The Gothick warriors are pinked out in the piebald finery of the time and are huge giants, taller than any Italian, with long fair hair falling in masses upon their shoulders. This is sufficiently indicated by the eloquent phrasing of a book written by a modern monk of Monte Oliveto, who says of them, "*masse di biondi capelli sfuggendo da piccoli berretti cadono sulle loro spalle.*"

The other fresco shows the saint receiving Totila in audience and prophesying to him that he would enter Rome, reign as King for nine years, and then die. The composition is almost identical with that of the preceding fresco, but the King has been given a more numerous following and their disposition has been worked out by the painter with a more convincing phantasy. Two warriors on horseback are most wonderfully rendered, and their mail is painted a cold, watery blue, such as this present age, to whom armour is extinct, have never had brought before their eyes. The foot-soldiers are no less gorgeous in their accoutrement, and their Northern hue and long fair hair are more easily emphasized. The hose they wear is of white, blue, and red, worn in its alternation on each leg so that the tongues, or flames, of red that flicker at ankle and knee into the white ground of the stocking are answered with their equivalent blue at the knee and ankle of the other leg. Their arms, chests, and backs are plated, and they wear long swords at their waists, while the blue steel of their halberds shines against the rocks above them. For the strangeness of the landscape round the monastery has inspired the painter and given him the background for this magpie, piebald finery.

Monte Oliveto Maggiore is built of bricks made from the red clay of the surrounding hills, that have been worn by wind and rain into a strange, wild roughness all over this huge prospect. Fierce ridges, only a few hundreds of feet in height, are worked into a whole Himalaya of peaks and chains, and where the feet cannot walk for a few breaths without having to climb up or down these steep and crumbling crevasses, necessity has made a dangerous path, from which not even the modern science of road-making has removed the thrill of danger, along the very summit of the ridge towards the isolated peninsula where the monastery stands. It may have been some small dell among these rocks that gave Signorelli his occasion for the picture of Pan and Apollo. The view over this strange region is not like anything else in the world, and this incursion into its midst of Totila and his Goths is as appropriate in its unlikelihood as the more probable flutings of the shepherds, who have been changed by this magical solitude into kings and gods.

It is as strange and remote as the granite hills above the Escurial, which one could imagine as the scene of practice for the military ascetics of that stern, stone Thebaid, had it ever been peopled with the anchorites appropriate to its cold barracks. There is only one other landscape that has such an inspiring effect upon the workings of the imagination. This is in the Atlas mountains above Meknes, on the road that passes Azrou.

The forest, where snow is on the ground for more than half the year and wild crocuses and wild peonies grow in abundance between the wide-spaced cedars of Atlas, lies ahead, and this wonderful view comes before the forest begins, when the road has edged imperceptibly towards the edge of a precipice, the plateau dips and

collapses, and suddenly half the world lies below you on the right. The vast landscape of this other earth, lying beneath, is revealed, in a second. It is a huge circle rimmed with mountains and filled with great volcanic cones, several of which hold lakes in their cups. It seems impossible that the dead lunar world, thus shown, should contain even a nomad tribe, and its inaccessibility is dramatized by a great eagle, almost as wide as an aeroplane in its wing-spread, that hovers above, patrolling the gale and making sudden descents into the gulf beneath, though these never take it into any near contact even with the peaks of that submerged world, and the eagle is soon floating once more high above this other earth on which we are moving. Indeed, these two earths seem to be rubbing shoulders as if a collision had taken place between them and they were forced to travel along side by side with each other for some space of time, giving a near and unreal view of the improbabilities of this ghostly satellite. These are the three most tremendous settings of nature's scene that it has ever been my fortune to set eyes upon, and this third Thebaid is not the least inspiring of them, though it is the only one of them that has not been given some work of art in temperament with its strangeness.

But smaller worlds, contained all within the compass of the eyes, can be found in which every single detail has been worked into harmony with the mind directing them. Such a one is the Tyranny of Rimini, and since it contains further evidence of my theories we can delay for a moment within its borders. This was the work of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, and the hard gains of his hired wars were used for its creation. Sigismondo employed the military engineer, L. B. Alberti, for the

building of his church, which was conceived on a plan, and within a symbolism that no other mind has ever attempted.(8) It was called after, and designed upon, a temple of the ancient world, but this could only be true of the general lines of its structure, for all the detail was left to craftsmen who had too many of their own ideas, and too little knowledge of anyone else's, to attempt anything but an original creation.

The situation of Rimini on the Adriatic coast opposite Greece facilitated Sigismondo in his Hellenism, and enabled him to procure the bones of a number of Greek scholars and philosophers whom he caused to be buried in sarcophagi that were built into the exterior sides of the temple between its classical bays. This was a very poetical perversion from the saints' bodies necessary to the erection of any Catholic church. A spiritual fragrance of more pleasing odour might be felt to emanate from the dust of such flower-fed minds, and the sanctity of this walled space was no less assured from the crumbled honey, as of asphodel and thyme, that the harmonious mind let linger in this holy air made sacred by death.

Within the church Sigismondo prepared a tomb for himself and his mistress, Isotta degli Atti. This is supported on the backs of four elephants, and imposed upon this symbolism that was, of necessity, Indian in form, the exquisite linear sculptures of the Florentine craftsmen who worked inside the church have attained to something of definitely the same character. Effects quite outside anything else in experience have been reached by them, and these figures of fair-haired maidens, many of them still bearing traces of the original gilding with which they were embellished, carry this dramatization of the legendary North into the furthest regions

that it ever arrived at. In this distant place there is something of the surprise and admiration that fair colouring is still greeted with in countries where it is never seen and is as rare as the sight of a black man in the snow. It has become the accepted concomitant of beauty. But, here, its truths are asserted out of the midst of a strange agglomerate of circumstance, for this Italian attempt at the symmetry and balance of Hellenism has found itself carried far beyond those near borders into a kind of Alexandrian India, colonized by that meteoric arrival, and with the conspicuous paleness of the white man given a more telling contrast with the dark races he had subdued by this insistence upon his fair hair. The Indian Kings, glittering in a steady tremolo of gems, and with their swarthy, heathen darkness made emphatic by rich raiment, and by the jewelled turrets put as a throne for them upon the elephant's back, have their tawdry splendour, which is not more strongly hinted at in these sculptures than by the mere showing of the elephant without a sign of its master or attendants, raised into a strong accent of useless extravagance and vain pomp by the absolute simplicity in which this Northern myth is apparelled.

These maidens wear nothing more solid than a shift, hardly patterned, or if at all, with flowers, and its light transparency reveals all the grace of their limbs beneath, and hardly veils the line of their bodies. A ruthless economy of effort has brought them into being, but this rises, not from an exhausted imagination, but out of the depthless and brimming wells of poetry, which ran with so strong an inspiration that in their haste to hurry on to the next thing the craftsmen strived for the most rapid and simple expression of the images flowing from their

hands. They were born with a natural and easy beauty that had nothing difficult about its shape, and the wind playing with their gowns billowed them into folds that ran smoothly with the blown sails, curved beaches, and the heads of foam shaken from the waves, and drew them into a natural parallel with the round fruits of the cornucopia, the sheafs of corn, and the whole landscape trembling into a line that summed up its distance.

These are queer products for what is, without dispute, one of the most complete tyrannies in history. We find the ideals born out of five centuries of Northern chivalry occupying a quite decisive share in this formation of physical principles, and these types of their admiration are fully borne out in the heads of hair, dramatically curbed and thickened, that appear on the beautiful medals designed for this state by the great Pisanello. If any further proof of this contention is needed, it may be found in the portrait coming from a state whose capital is not more than fifteen miles away from Rimini. This is the portrait by Piero della Francesca of Battista Sforza, Duchess of Urbino, the daughter of the tyrant of Pesaro, and wife of the Condottiero Federico, Duke of Urbino. This is the greatest presentment of a Gothick aristocrat that has ever been achieved. Her fair hair, tapering hands, and high-bridged nose, epitomize everything that history, or the imagination, could tell about this type of person, and they are related in this instance by an artist whose partiality lay in other directions and who had no trace of feudality in his attitude, which merely reported truthfully this thing lying before his eyes. The wonderful landscape on the back of the panel where the Duchess and her husband are drawn in a chariot by unicorns, with emblematical figures accom-

panying them, through a romantic plain hemmed in by hills, completes that extraordinary appearance by lifting it into another age and making it belong to the plays of Dekker, or of Roberto Greene. In the distance we may imagine the new castle of Urbino, built by her husband and herself, and into which it is now too late for us to enter. That is the first palace built with no room for ghosts in its dark corners, being the most beautiful expression of sanity, and of necessary and indispensable beauty, that the hands of men have ever contrived. The glories of its doorways, its mantelpieces, and its ceilings are triumphs that no other age, or race, has ever approached ; and we see the physical embodiment of all that the fair-haired races accomplished working in their seclusion without the help of the Italian, enshrined, now, in the culmination of those opposite, Italian principles.

It may be found in lesser degree, but only because this is the supreme instance of their stage-craft, everywhere that the Italian genius found its patrons. After Urbino, the most beautiful palace is that of Mantua, but here a change of proportion has come over the scheme, due, we may imagine, to the finding of the Farnese Hercules, and to the fulfilment of that giant canon of strength in the bearded, lusty Teutons of the Imperial army that sacked Rome in 1527, and who were on the march through Italy for a generation to come. As might be expected, the beginnings of this muscular distortion were in Rome. Their strange effect, which is less peculiar to eyes that have grown used to the monumental females of Picasso's pictures, the dark sisters of this fair Hercules, who bathe or play on the shores of the blue Mediterranean, was soon allowed an architectural setting to accord with its inflated scale. The halls and corridors

of the Palazzo Farnese were designed by Michelangelo for persons of this size and importance.* A dismantled guardroom is still shown with high coffered ceiling of cypress wood designed by the hand of the master, and here a dozen of these monsters may be imagined sleeping in the dim aureole thrown by a lantern set high in the wall; the noise of their breathing seems to fill the room, and the light catches the blades of their halberds that lean, tall as flagstaffs, against the sides of the hall.

From this, it was an immediate step into the gardens of the time, where this huge scale, and the natural silence of such giants, suggested their facile transference into sylvan deities and water-gods. Caprarola, the summer castle of the Farnese, and Villa Lante, near Viterbo, are two examples of this. The gardens at both these places were designed by Vignola, and, in either place, the stone gods recline wearily at their duties, grown over, now, by moss and lichen. Water still drips from their wide mouths, opened as if in invocation, or pours from their urns. Their scale has exalted them out of the ordinary nicety of the floral world into something that is really elemental. Their majestic and overwhelming sadness, giving birth, none the less, to laughing water and nodding flowers, is a thing that the mind can never forget and this solemn poetry that they produce leads without any undue emphasis, at Caprarola, to the terraced garden at the summit of the hill which is ringed round with the statues of the twenty-four choephoræ, fauns who carry baskets of fruits and flowers upon their heads, and whose

* The Palazzo Farnese was begun in the first years of the sixteenth century by Sangallo the younger for Cardinal Farnese, afterwards Pope Paul III. When Sangallo died Michelangelo carried on the work, and Bramante, Giacomo della Porta, and Vignola, all had a share in its construction.

parted lips, with the varying expression of their sinister features, seem to make them sing or speak to each other in some undertone that the hour of day will not allow to be audible.

To their protection these fair-haired giants have been doomed, who are never allowed away from their posts and have assumed, because of this, something of the ferocity of the watch-dog who is never allowed off his chain. They are a little frightening in their silence, and their quiet persistence. Some among them are so worn by the rains and winds of time that they keep only the rough resemblance to features that a hill may have, whose rocks must be looked at a long time before the face coming out of them can be seen. Their feet and hands are broken, the stone clubs they hold are cracked and fallen, and their urns and cornucopiæ flourish with the secondary and desert growths of the damp, with trailing ferns, and parasite moss and lichen. Water falls from them and runs down its prepared channels of twisted stone, with purposeful impediments put in its course and down its bed, so as to vary the noise of waters and make them more melodious and of a richer compass. This perpetual dirge is at any rate a more beautiful accompaniment to these dying giants than anything that the chatter and bawled information of a museum-room can provide; but the Gothick colours and the other, supporting inspiration, as of Totila and his Goths, pictured in the frescoes described not far back, that confirmed and governed their creation into this stone reality, has by now left them, long ago, so that they seem the uncertain works of an age that no knowledge can help to identify.

The rumours of these things were soon dissipated far

and wide from Rome and were carried to Mantua by Giulio Romano. This neglected painter and architect had the greatest renown in his generation and even won the curious fame of being the only painter that Shakespeare mentions by name. His architectural skill, which later generations have nearly ignored, is evident all over the city of Mantua, and he was the most fervent apostle of these giantist principles. This is evident in the twelve giant caryatids with whom he decorated the façade of the Palazzo di Giustizia, and is made more manifest still in the courtyard for tournaments, called the Cortile della Cavallerizza, in the Palazzo Ducale.* This huge affair, with its twisted pillars and its balconies looking over the lagoons, is calculated to show off the struggles, not of ordinary horses and men, but of that family of giants. Because of their impossibility and non-existence, the opposite extreme of height became a curiosity that the wealth of the Gonzaga could easily collect. The Mantuan dwarves, bred in the palace for buffoons and pets, had their own apartments designed by Giulio Romano, with tiny doors and low ceilings suited to their stature; which, after all, must have seemed as improbable, and as far removed from ordinary humanity, as the non-existent giants to whose scale these greater buildings were accommodated.

In his frescoes, Giulio Romano showed the same predilection for this bolstered majesty, induced, perhaps a little too easily, from girth and muscle. Out of so much

* It is impossible in this reference not to draw attention to the palace of Charles V on the Alhambra hill at Granada. This, and the delightful fountain in the Alhambra Park, were the work of Pedro Machuca (d. 1550), a native of Granada, educated at Rome. The magnificent colonnaded circular court of the palace, and the sculptured doorways of the façade, are entirely in the Mantuan manner and are worthy of Giulio Romano.

that was designed by him it is difficult to deduce a particular instance, but the Sala di Troia is certainly a conspicuous example. Here, his principles have found an easy subject in the Wooden Horse. This incident has been lifted easily into the epical region, though the plumed warriors are fully as big as the animal that was to carry them, and it is not easy to imagine how even a single one of them could find room for himself in that hollowed belly. These heroic protagonists are all alike gifted with the fair hair that we should expect of them, and, indeed, by this time another influence that tended to make this a certainty was in operation. But that must be considered shortly, when this Mantuan splendour has been sufficiently described. For these different episodes from the Iliad reveal the utmost extension of all the conventions that this heroic subject could inspire in a painter. Furious battles are in progress which are doomed for ever to remain indecisive. White stallions, chosen specimens, no doubt, from the famous Mantuan stud, draw the chariots into the thick of the fight, and the crested helmets give a tragic dignity to their wearers. Those ancient wars were without the weapon of fire, and so fine summer trees blow uninjured over the scene and the boughs throw a trembling shade upon the dying. They have been granted perpetual sunny weather for their combats, broken only by clouds, that make a pretty echo to the white stallions reared up with snorting nostrils in their arrested speed.

These points of interpretation are carried still further in the Palazzo del Té, the summer villa of the Gonzaga, designed by Giulio Romano and built just outside the town. There are two rooms here that deserve our particular attention. In the first of them the pupils

of Giulio Romano have painted under his direction the six favourite horses of Federico Gonzaga. These have a monumental, rather unpleasant importance, and have been emphasized as if they made a dramatic occasion and were not merely the pet animals of their master. They mark the first arrival in the land of Brobdingnag, and are part of the reactions of a painter's overworked nervous system that gives undue prominence to inanimate, or at any rate dumb, objects. This same neurotic fatigue, in our own generation, has given us the swollen hands in certain of Picasso's figures, the inflated forms of one whole period of his work, and the lay figures, sensitive chairs and tables, and spectral statues, with whose help Giorgio de Chirico has formed his most individual mannerisms.

Passing through a room with a frieze of Roman soldiers on the march, and another room frescoed with four battles of Centaurs, Amazons, and Tritons, we come to the second of our two objects. This is called the Sala dei Giganti. Walls and ceiling, alike, are frescoed with the Battle of the Giants, drawn by Giulio Romano and coloured under his supervision by three of his pupils. The giants are in rebellion against Jupiter, and huge rocks, uptorn trees, and the terrors of thunder and lightning are the weapons in use. This room was finished in 1532, and the discovery of the Farnese Hercules eight years later must have come as a curious justification of its apparent eccentricity. The peculiarities of it were made the more observable, as I have hinted, by the dwarves of the palace, who were no further removed from the normal scale than these men fifteen feet high. The usual tendency to still further blacken a villain's character by painting him dark and swarthy is very

noticeable, while the stronger the poetic association the more certain is it that its embodiment will be allowed fair hair and Northern colouring. In fact, the North now begins to be the home from which poetry comes forth.

The lesser and dependent Gonzaga Duchies have the same things to show, but reduced in a proportionate scale. The model town of Sabbioneta, the creation of Charles V's general, Vespasiano Gonzaga (1531–1591), has the same equine interest in its palace, but these frescoes, and that statue, are more truly simple in their appeal and have lost the strange flavour of their original. The actual town of Gonzaga, the ancient seat of an independent marquisate of the family down till the year 1737, has a bronze statue by Leone Leoni in its market-place of Ferdinando Gonzaga (d. 1559) trampling down envy and rebellion, symbolized by a satyr who struggles under his feet. The general wears the kilt of a Roman Emperor, and this strange statue in that crowded market-place is a most typical example of the complicated imagery that had become the jargon and the ordinary conversation of the time.

Just beyond the Po valley, and its Gonzaga Duchies, the town of Piacenza has the last two specimens of this cult that we need pause to investigate, in the shape of a pair of statues of horsemen, again in its market-place. These represent Alessandro and Ranuccio Farnese; and they have over and above those qualities that we should by now expect of them, a new and final interest of a double origin. For the costume of these two cavaliers is decidedly Spanish in its fashion, a trait which is no longer puzzling when it is remembered that Cremona is near Milan, that had been for a long period under Spanish

rule. And there is, also, it may be thought, some echo of the statues of the Can Grande and his family at Verona. These horsemen, high upon their tombs, with their persons altogether hidden in plate armour so that even the horse has trappings down to his feet, until the tyrant's person is only recognizable by his armour and the badge above his shield, these are direct spiritual ancestors of this later pair of cavaliers, garbed more for conspiracy than tyranny, and with cloak and plumed hat doing duty for shield and visor. They are of the date and style of Callot and form an admirable assurance as to his truth of observation regarding the Spanish pomp and braggadocio of that epoch. The wind from the street corner fills out their sleeves and scarves into lines much more suggestive of the tattered rags of war than the billowy curves and blown-out insolence of Bernini's marble. Their dressed hair, and the starched Spanish collars that they wear, are modelled upon the Habsburg Court dress, so that we can see a suggestion of the blanched skins and flaxen locks of the Austrian race coming into these statues. Gothick features and dynastic chins were an anachronism of the seventeenth century, influencing all its history till the invention of the periwig gave birth to another age. In their flattery of imitation this pair of statues bear out that survival of mediaeval appearance, and they have, therefore, a belated contingency to my subject.*

But, by now, the predilection of the Italians for the Northern type, and its consequent fixation as the ideal

* Alessandro Farnese was the son of Ottavio Farnese and Margaret of Parma, natural daughter of the Emperor Charles V. Ranuccio was the son of Alessandro. This explains their Habsburg appearance. The statues of this brother and nephew of Phillip II are by Francesco Mocchi of Tuscany, and their date is 1620–1625.

PALMA VECCHIO. THE THREE SISTERS.
Royal Gallery Dresden.

[*Facing p.* 109

had become definitely and for ever established.* The town in which this was decided was Venice, which has always had among its population a certain proportion of fair, or red-haired, inhabitants, but it was the second generation of great painters who achieved this, and even then we must only associate it with two among them, Veronese and Palma Vecchio. The Venetian women who had red hair were in the habit of bleaching it into as flaxen a condition as possible by exposing their heads to the sun in a very wide-brimmed hat from which they cut out the crown, allowing their hair to come out through this, and only keeping the broad rims of the hat for a protection to their necks and faces. This explains the exaggerated paleness of hair in Palma Vecchio, more especially in his portraits at Vienna, and in the group of three women, supposed to be his daughters, at Dresden. The latter picture, so unfashionable from a contemporary point of view, is of the deepest interest in what it reveals of the life and admirations of its period.

The reputation of Venice for intrigue and gallantry was brought about by these soft colossi, wide-bosomed, and requiring of their lovers energetic dispute and dangerous jealousies among themselves in keeping with the ardent courtship necessary to keep them amused and attentive. The poems these three sisters must have had by heart, and the songs they sang to the vibrating lute, will have been of a pungent subtlety as strongly

* Its essential untruthfulness to what really lived in their midst is best exemplified in the paintings of Caravaggio. There is not a single person with fair hair among the gallants and contadini who were his models; but Caravaggio worked in Rome, Naples, Sicily, and Malta, and shows no direct influence of the Venetian school. On the other hand, the most particular contradiction to this reality is to be found in the painting of Correggio, who, for the blond prettiness of his types, might well be contemporary with Mr. Ziegfeld and the Film Corporations.

flavoured as the sweetmeats, eaten in quantity, and responsible for some flaccidity in their physical shape. It may be imagined that the three of them together, walking on their high pattens, will have filled any Venetian alley and captured the high instep of each bridge they came to. Their reflections, leaning over the parapet into the weedy mirror below, came back to them and seemed in the beating sunlight like a group of parhelions settled on the water, or wherever the eyes look, after a mistaken catch of sun from looking up at some window cusped with Gothick fire above its openings. Or they may be thought of in a boat charged with fruit from the mainland crossing the limpid sky of the lagoons that echo every cloud in their shallows.

Their gallantry, parcelled into three divisions, occupied all the dark shadows of the house. If, as is probable, they were courtesans, foreign visitors of importance will have been sent to see them under police instruction as to their charges and conduct. Their culture and learning are, by this, the more assured, and the freedom of their profession made them into friends and models for the painters of the town without the ordinary and difficult trammels surrounding such association. Every circumstance helped to make this easy, and the gondoliers had rope-ladders which they mentioned to strangers and then hired out, so that the primitive embarrassment and explanation necessary at a door could be dispensed with by a quick climb in at the window.

If we leave these large heroines and look for their equivalent in the pictures of Veronese, we find a difference in essentials, for his women have all the virtues of parade and tenure as though they had been raised from the earliest age to be hostesses, and to take their places in a

cloudy pageantry designed for their display. The arts of the theatre and of music could not yet effect an apotheosis, so that this had to be brought about by the alternation between rounded arms, deep bosoms, coiled and gilt hair, and the gorgeous brocades and damasks that were the product of Venice, and of which Veronese is known to have kept a large wardrobe constantly by him for this purpose. Perhaps this side of his art is best seen where it is least expected, and the little church of San Sebastiano, at Venice, which is entirely filled with his paintings will reveal his method and its practice to a better advantage than his work in the Doge's Palace, or the great scenic compositions in Paris and Dresden. His contemporary fame, down to the dispersion of Venice at the hands of Napoleon, rested chiefly upon the four banqueting scenes, or " Cene," great machineries painted at the ends of refectories. The first of these, the Marriage of Cana, painted for the refectory of S. Giorgio Maggiore, is now in the Louvre ; the second, the Call of St. Matthew, was painted for the refectory of SS. Giovanni and Paolo ; the third was the Feast of Simon in the Church of S. Sebastiano ; and the fourth, of the same subject, was painted for the refectory of the Servi, but was sent to Louis XIV and placed at Versailles. The background of architecture in all of these is due to his friendship with Palladio, and it was when these two men came into a close contact that restrained the luxuriant imagination of the first, while it coloured and enriched the fugal, dry fancy of the second, that both of them produced their master-work.

This fortunate mating of two talents was responsible for several villas of the Venetian nobles, and we may bid farewell to our subject in those porticoes. They were

designed by two of the finest, and ultimate, minds of the Renaissance as a shell to contain this physical type that we have followed to such lengths through history. In all, there are about a dozen villas that Palladio designed upon the Venetian terra firma, and Veronese painted the frescoes and decorations in about half of these. His pupil and associate, Zelotti, helped him in some of them and worked by himself in others; while a great sculptor, Vitoria, the friend of both architect and painter, embellished more than one villa with his work.

Out of all these houses it will be sufficient to speak of the Villa Maser, or Giacomelli, where all three artists worked together. Let it be known, once and for all, that this is the most beautiful private dwelling ever produced by the genius of the white races! It satisfies every luxury of the mind and senses without distortion, enervation, or luxury. It has dignity without pomposity, unstinted beauty, the solid poetries of volume and proportion, and the association of great artists working together within pleasant limits of smallness. There is no extravagance in scale or in material, no ruin of the client, and no unwillingness, or inability, on his part ever to finish the project put before him. This is the last alien home into which we can pursue the altered embodiment of all the qualities we set out to discover and preserve, and it must be admitted that, by now, all things, except the mere fallacies of pigmentation, have changed.

All the delights of harmony are in the very plan of the villa. The cornice, bold and judiciously sufficient; the doorway, just dramatic enough, and giving no unlikely emphasis to the figures that were to pass in and out of it; the aerial elaboration of the frescoes, letting light into the room with a field, a flashing fountain, or

the coolness of a hill, or bringing the blank spaces of the wall into reality with a dog, a man in livery, or the image of some member of the family; these things are the privacies of each room, for there is hardly one of them that has not been given this consideration by painter and architect. They worked here during the summer and early autumn of each year when the canals were dry and stagnant, so that something of this recreation and holiday has entered into each conception, and governed its creation into these planned and painted fictions. The plain colonnade of the exterior, and the answering portico of the church that they designed, express very well the needs of this hot weather, for the pale shadows of white upon white seem to be contrived especially for a day unbroken by clouds and with nothing better for shade than cypress and plane tree.

The real persons dwelling in this paradise as guests were the senators of the Republic. Portraits by Titian and Tintoretto have preserved the image of these dark-bearded men in their robes of office, curtained from the sea, more often than not, by a drapery of red or green. There is a frugal magnificence about their bearing and manner, a luxury of externals which the Palladian Villas confirm and make evident. But poetic optimism intended a different population, and of this we can find idea and suggestion in the sculpture. In order to surmount its stint and economy, for in the Villa Maser the delights of necessity have been made use of to whet the appetite, and none of the three artists concerned have put their clients in any danger of a surfeit, it is important to think of this sculptor's more elaborate opportunities, and the occasion for these was in the Doge's Palace. There, it is not possible to doubt the nature of the ideal

figures with whom he and his friends would have liked the numbers in the villa to have been swelled. They are distinctively of the Northern race, with no doubt left open as to this by the argument of their hair, which is coloured. Thus, an almost entirely alien population was requested, for people of genuine fair hair were most uncommon, being of no greater frequency than the usual proportion of red-haired persons in every race.

By this time, the creations of Ariosto and Tasso had made this orientation towards the North more certain, and had put into permanence the legends upon which it was supported. This is the least understood among all the channels into which the waters of the Renaissance ran. By a sudden and strange reversal of fortune the North became the source from which poetry flowed forth, and the Italians no longer looked to Greece, or into their own midst, for inspiration. This dramatic change of direction had a final importance in establishing the Northern type as desirable canon and fixed ideal of physical beauty. The influences of this poetry are most visible in the paintings of Dosso Dossi, a citizen of Ferrara and the countryman of Ariosto. He was much employed by Alphonso and Ercole II, Dukes of Ferrara, and, in his pictures, this turn about of interest towards the mythology and chivalry of the North is very clearly portrayed. There is a sighing after the mysteries of a dead age that had become extinct almost within the memory of living men. But these two poets, out of all the great names that were once a power in Europe, are the least read; although their predominance lasted for at least a century and a half after their deaths, and it should not be possible in picture, book, or tapestry, to see a curtain corded into a tree giving shade to an

armoured warrior without thinking of the epics of chivalry that made this so familiar a convention.

The walls of Troy had burned down quite into the ground, and the triremes flashed their oars on other seas. The mediaeval mingling of names, when Troy and Jerusalem were joined into one epoch, came true again, for the armies of the North now marched into the sun for a set of wars as tiring and ineffective as the Trojan series, yet poet and painter armed his warriors as for the Greek wars, since the heroic costume, apparently, knew no changes and always kept its rigours of convention. So this poetry, of Northern origin, was poured into a classical mould, and we find these fresh heroes and their women domiciled in the porticoes and colonnades of Palladio.

Here, as I have said, we must bid farewell to them. This Italian, or other half of the European world, devoting itself more to things of the spirit than to commerce and prosperity, had ended by assuming to itself a physical inferiority to the shadows out of a colder sun. The very age, then, that surrendered the management of its arts to Italy, gave these hostages, that dwelt in the midst of the Italian ferment and influenced every idea and concept that came out of it.

A new and triumphant vindication came with the arrival of Rubens. He was the first man, of non-Italian race, able to co-ordinate his schemes into the great and intricate machinery of Veronese. But, in order to do this, an unimaginable physical vitality had to be shared out among his figures, and a quality, typical, almost, of the circus-tent weighed them out of the ordinary terrestrial plane into capacity with his plans for them. The noise and speed of his hunting of the wild-boar must have

shaken the woods and brakes; while the Sabine women raped from their husbands demanded an appetite, on the part of all three parties concerned, such as has never existed, and that no climate could stimulate into activity. His finest work, the altar-piece of the Nuptials of St. Catherine with the Infant Jesus, in the church of St. Augustine at Antwerp, is a composition of such magnitude as no other painter has ever achieved. Its ascending and returning spirals are seen from the door of the church long before the figures can be made out, but they give the exact impression of the drama that is going on, just as an accident, or men fighting, can be guessed in their action and purposes while they are still too far off to be identified. On coming nearer to the high altar, this tremendous ceremony is manifested while in movement; the figures are not so still, posed in positions made lively and moving by the gorgeous silk and brocade of their dresses, as with Veronese. Nor is the melodrama of thunder and darkness, of figures jumping in and out of the picture with startling and correcting aim, as if thrown in these directions by the force of some blow or missile, made use of in order to intensify the story, after the manner of Tintoretto.

But the liveliest parade, and the climax of his invention, is the Galerie Medicis of the Louvre. Indeed, this is the apotheosis of Celt and Teuton, and it sums up every quality and advantage of the race, contrasted to the Latins. This overpowering conception, filling a huge hall with great scenes painted out of its walls, represents the whole Renaissance dragged back into the North by the power and personality of one man. It has been done, too, without the attractive theatrical trickery of the Italians, a thing about them which stultifies and at last

diminishes their value, so that, in the "Cene" of Veronese, the chickens, eggs, and bread upon the table begin to appal by the counterfeit of their presentment, and finish by reminding the eyes of the wax-works of the Sacro Monte at Varallo. Instead of this, the incidentals, the furnishings of the scenes, are of a more fluid importance, made subservient to the figures. As to the blonde character of all the protagonists who could not be argued with historical certainty to be dark, it is omnipresent and incontestable. The supernumeraries are allowed no other choice but this, and the victory of the fair-haired race is secure and unquestioned.

It is celebrated in its last phase by Tiepolo, whose style, founded out of Veronese and Rubens, was calculated from its very origins towards this end. But his adaptation omitted their heaviness. The heroic qualities that first appeared in the Trojan scenes of Giulio Romano, two centuries before, attains in him to the climax of its splendour; that heap of dead names which Dr. Burney terms the Augustan period of music (singers like Faustina, Cuzzoni, Farinelli, composers like Hasse, Leo, Jomelli); the poetry of Dryden and Pope and their foreign contemporaries; architects, including even Sir Christopher Wren; all these different phases of that lapse of time are set forth and expressed in his frescoes. He was the finest artist of his century, and, even now, his eminence and merit are not recognized at their true value. He marks the last and greatest contingency to my theme, as all eyes will know that have ever seen the banquet of Cleopatra in the Labia Palace, or the staircase and Kaisersaal at Würzburg. In these works the choice and predilection of his line of painters for the Northern, non-Italian races,

is proved over and over again, just before the death of this long-lived school.

The Queen landing from her barge, attended by a page of her race, and then seen at the banquet with Antony, is my contention, made alive and personal. The balcony of musicians, the Egyptian obelisk, the cypresses and statues, the crowd of Moors and Roman soldiers, all these accessories give point and emphasis to my argument. This is further advanced by the ceiling of the great stair at Würzburg, where the four quarters of the globe, each given one wall of the ceiling to itself, are contrasted with the nymphs and goddesses of Olympus who occupy the whole heavenly vault. The marriage of Barbarossa which is the subject of his frescoes in the Kaisersaal is, by its very nature, of the same scope. So this expiring Italian art, for nothing more was to come after this, celebrated these virtues of the North with its dying breath.

The fresco of Apollo riding his chariot in the clouds, which occupies the ceiling of the Kaisersaal above the panels of the red-bearded Emperor in his nuptials, is perhaps the most beautiful abstraction of nude figures ever painted by this master. It has a physical poetry that no imagination can surpass, and we may finish our vindication and alarm among those clouds and in that unencumbered air. The chariot is axle-deep in cloud, and, as though this were Neptune and his mermen, the nymphs break their number in every direction and pose themselves upon, or against, the wind. It is this, and not the elemental air, that supports them, and the sum of their different attitudes depends upon its stream and rides sunwards with the painting of the chariot. The whole affair depends for its focus and correct perspective upon a corner of cloud caught on to the ceiling, which

gives it all the scale it has and is as useful for this purpose as the string between a kite and the person flying it. But every inhabitant of this air is given the fair colouring essential to the abstract element in which the god and his attendants dwell.

This was a rule never contradicted. Many years later, in a book of letters from Naples and the Campagna Felice published in the year of Waterloo, there is one particular aquatint, among the illustrations by Rowlandson, that deserves our attention. It depicts a public letter-writer at his stall surrounded by a bevy of seven young women who are availing themselves of his presence to send messages to their lovers. The background is filled with an admirable screen of palaces and churches, so typical of Naples, though apparently the artist never visited the town, that it is probable a print of one of the chief streets was copied by him to give an air of veracity to his drawing. In opposition to this careful accuracy of the caricaturist the whole of that group of young women have been drawn and coloured in his usual manner, giving them the fair hair that would have made them an object of curiosity, and, indeed, of persecution, had they made an authentic appearance on the scene.

But this piece of carelessness on his part would seem to be not unjustified if any ceiling or painted wall in church or palace were examined for the same evidence. The school of painters associated with Luca Giordana and Solimena were apparently of the same opinion as the English caricaturist, and the dark Neapolitan reality was altogether ignored by them. These are among the last works of the old European art, and they show the permeation of this ideal into the alien South, where it was as foreign as a fall of snow.

The Italians, who lived through the eighteenth century in a poverty and untidiness like that in the studio of an unsuccessful painter, old furniture and bric-à-brac, carved frames, pieces of brocade, were sensible of this Northern superiority, physical and material. And they had the testimony to this effect of nearly every artist who had worked among them. This, then, was a shadowy, unprofitable victory, winning back some kind of renown against the breakdown of all the architecture and life of the North in favour of the new inventions coming out of Italy. For without wealth or conspicuous power, the Italians had made a spiritual conquest over the great kingdoms lying to the north of the mountains, but they acknowledged the greater resources of their enemy and paid this tribute to the strength they had subdued.

As to the efficacy of these principles in the countries most concerned at their greatest period, it will only be necessary to point for an example to the Elizabethan age in England. This was the only time in our history when the aristocrats proved their purpose and produced the writers, poets, and military or naval leaders, whom it was the duty of their wealth and leisure to provide against this privilege. The miniatures of Hilliard, that give an almost complete picture of the Court of Elizabeth, contain an overwhelming preponderance of fair hair, and as this class lost its caste, and its Norman blood was dispersed, it can be argued that they lost with it all their talents and everything that made their privilege defensible. Thus, the thinning of the Gothick strain meant the loss of the isolation and peculiarity of their race.

So we come back to the first effects that the North

produced upon strangers to its history, and the claim of this ancient chivalry is at least reinforced by evidence of the homage paid to it by painters. We find the gold backgrounds of the primitives fading with new invention into a mere halo, which circles a head of hair not much less gilded than that mark of sanctity. Those in whom virtue and beauty were supposed to dwell were given, inevitably, this attribute; and the secular legends moving up behind the religious, preserved the same qualities and allowed a similar licence of improbable appearance to their heroes. A chain of instances has been given, and this Italian flattery of the North has been proved in all its examples. Two chapters: on the tapestries that were the greatest product of long winters, and upon the monasteries that were the most ambitious practitioners of architecture, and to whom nearly all mediaeval building is due, are now confirmed and coloured in an account of how this energy impressed the great artists who conquered it.

Alas! now, both these ages are dead; the one of them not being more remote from us than the other. A third has been laboriously begun, mostly in poverty and persecution, with only the posthumous honours of the sale-room to comfort men who died in defeat. Till the present, painters and writers of fiction have been its only progenitors, and the much more needed architects, musicians, and poets have worked little anarchy and no construction. For their inspiration, the past must build up its store of anecdote in a new accumulation of imagery, and this has been the only purpose, though but half the pleasure, of my pages. But now these old ruins must be left cold and empty once more, for the sound of voices, and a lighted window, beckon us back to the living.

III

FINALE

AND what has been the use of it all? The uncertain mists, resolved for a time into something no more solid than the mirage on a plain, hold nothing, and have nothing left. The quivering distance we imaged into an elbow of sea, shining, now here, now there, with no more burden than its shallows, scarcely deep enough to sail upon. Lying above it, we carved a cliff of chalk, and upon that a castle hung with gossamer histories. The shore below this had an infinity of shells, freshly strewn by the morning sea. These crackled as each step destroyed them. It was more idyllic than any field of grass, while, far away, making a more substantial poetry, the skeleton of a whale lay like a great ship, and its timbers were falling apart in the salt wind.

Behind the castle, the dells were full of deer. The clashing of their antlers sounded like a battle of wooden swords. As for the hounds, they ran baying through the woods, with red tongues lolling from their mouths. Trumpets and horses could hardly be heard for those clamouring throats. The haunting of the woods was after this nature, for what the sleepless dreaded to hear was the winding of a horn in the moonlight. No adventure by day could explain this terror from the hanging wood.

Then the moon climbed above that bank of trees and the walls of the castle shone out at once, as does marble if water is dashed upon it. But the shadows became more sombre still from this milk of the moonlight poured upon their flesh of black. A high tower could have topped the tree-cliff, and its bells would sound out clearly over the forest. Wherever the noise of bells could reach to had some measure of spiritual safety, and the dangers of darkness were dispelled, or at any rate warned off in such manner. The sacred colleges mumbled their youth away to this same purpose, and the noddings of dotage had an identical meaning.

That was one side of life, and for the other, steep doorways, borrowed from the church, rose to a point in their height as though to allow passage to plume and tiara. These brushed against, or clattered upon, the Gothick arch, while those more familiar figures from playing-card and chess-board reached only to the breadth of the door before it narrowed into character. This is our universal ancestry, and who has not shared in it, has at any rate seen these things with his unborn eyes, scaled through many incarnations till the present realities of touch and sound have been reached. These are fabulous and legendary truths, differing, because of this, from the intangible, unrelated past of Angkor or the Parthenon, dead things that have always been alien to us.

Every dawn puts that distance further behind us, till what is called the Middle Ages, lying half way between the start of the Christian religion and the present, will soon be a long way to one side of that watershed of time. Then, but little of the sleepy past of street and church will be left to us, and poetry will have to find new dwellings for its adepts. But, when that happens, this

strange fermentation of the spirit, which is unquenchable, and which seems to live more especially in our own race, must find inevitably, a fresh direction for the relief of its agonies and pleasures. Even the age in which this beauty was rediscovered now seems dusty and remote from us, nearly invested with an antiquity of its own. To look at it through the eyes of the brother and sister I created for this end is to experience, for this reason, a double set of emotions. Such, apparently, are the only uses of the past, and its traces can have lasted for no other end than this, that they should sharpen our sentiment and put the fiction of life into things irremediably dead.

I could have taken my pair of witnesses with me wherever I went, but the sum of their saddening enthusiasm would have brought me to ground long before my wings were exhausted. So it was better they should stay away; and we can find them, where they have so often been found before, in the orchard at the back of that village inn, or behind the mullions in a lighted room.

The men and women out of that past are as children to us with our mechanical inventions, but we are in the same stature to them, dwarfed before their giant eminence where the poetry of the senses is concerned. Therefore, not only is antiquity sad because it is so old, ageing a little even as we think of it, but, also, its living force was something that we have missed. The massed effects and properties of those expired centuries give the illusion of something existing parallel to, but divided from, ourselves. It is the very world in which we want to live, lying near to us, but impossible to touch, or be in communion with; separated from us, so it seems, by some barrier whose nature we cannot either define, or

overcome. Thus, its whole total is, in a sense, contemporary with us, and yet by no effort can we break into its area, and it is kept away from us by some infrangible rule that neither body nor mind can contradict.

It is easy enough to personify this loss. The casting for its characters need go no further than the fair-haired sept whose various energies this book has been written to celebrate. In a sense it is a sisterhood of Ophelias, for this nunnery encloses a race, all alike, and of one pattern. The thin distension and elaboration of their form is as though they were only to be seen through a film of water, which has combed back their long, flat hair with its weedy fingers and pressed their whole symmetry into its own limpid convenience. The fine hands, pale as milk and tapering to the nail-points, seem to have been rubbed with honey from the dropped flowers floating on the stream, or from the lilies that live of their own volition upon the waters. If the hair is not blonde and fluid, then it is coiled into some water-fixity after the pattern left by a rilled shell upon wet sand. These will be ornaments to the shells of each ear. As to the mind hidden behind this chastity and its defences, the very extent of its shortcomings is an absorbing mystery, which becomes still stranger on investigation. Then, this veil between ourselves and the past is lifted a little, but only to that point of comprehension which might be reached if speech was only possible with the eyes and any understanding of the lips was still forbidden. But no further point than this is ever arrived at, and, here, only half-way into words, this communion is interrupted and can never be improved into permanence.

The body of this beautiful and strange mystery lies so close to us that we can feel the warm emanation coming

from it, but our eyes, the only contact we have with it, never tell us of any change, though such lover's blindness is unwarranted and the gradual, slow decay of this ideal should be visible even to ourselves. If this is not so, it must be because of the inviolate sanctity, the sacred nunnery, in which this embodiment has been immured. This cloister is the work of our own hands and we are loath to destroy it. Only shadows, timed to the fateful clock, build here, and not even the spider hangs his nets. We may only look upon the outside walls and can never gain entrance, so that the ghost at a window is all the reward of vigilance.

Here, indeed, in this familiar orchard I was in the same predicament, but with this difference, that the window was lit, not with moonlight, but by authentic means called into being at a touch of the finger, and that the spider's web stretched from bough to bough, crossing even that gulf of ocean the path on which I walked. These lines, laid by him at night, the spider can have just completed, but already the dew was strung upon them, brushing the face and hands, while his web hid its strength behind that gentle, static rain, and the moisture seemed to be not dew strung upon the spider's web, but the corner of a shower caught in the green air and held there. After a time, the broken nets must have trailed along both sides of the path, blowing after me as I went and drawn back again each time I came back, but the wise conspirator who had made them moved his schemes into another direction and never tried to repair his damaged plans.

A poignant, insufferable tension held the nerves and locked the senses, keeping every other thought out of mind. All this search among the dead was ended; the

looting of their tombs was finished, and two whole years crumbled in my fingers into a stretch of moments. Apart from what life the pages of this book can give it, all the body of that investigation and discovery imprisoned itself into a sequence so small and rapid that its effect was simultaneous. In the same way a journey of many hours or an illness lasting months will compress themselves into the memories of a few seconds. This is time seen through a diminishing glass, that dwindles alike its pains and heroics and shrinks the stature of all things in proportion.

This was the last evening, the ending episode; and after it was over some other direction would open in front of me. Just now, it was not the start of the new, but the finish of the old, that lay before me. I should never want to come back here again, being more happy if I thought of it than ever I could be if I made the resolution to arrive again, to ask for my room, and to walk out quickly into the garden while my luggage was taken upstairs. But I could well imagine the breathless, painful silence in which I should be walking along this path, hardly daring to make a noise for fear it should dispel, or interrupt, any of the things I wanted to remember. As for the pair of artists, sitting upstairs, now, behind that lighted window, certainly even in the imagination I never allowed them to be here once more, for their shadows must be kept away from this reality in which I had seen them. The very possibility of these things made one of the saddest moments in life, more dreadful by far than this true farewell to the substance on which my fancy had fed itself for so long.

By now, the darkness had broken into a loud starlight which put little moats and castles on every leaf, while

the apples looked dark and heavy as stones, and their bright skins, and the sweetness of their bodies piercing into the very core of their being, were difficult to believe in. The trees were tall enough to stand beneath and the branches made a fretted roof, not thick enough for shelter but intended more for a capricious thinning of the heat, as in some pavilion of the torrid East where rain was not to be hoped for and its imitation, made by artifice, might play at a wish through the diapers of the lattice. These apple trees were numerous as the tents of the plain, with only their difference of height and girth by which to tell them one from another, but their shade was never lived in for long enough to do this. Nor were the castles of the light to be known at a glance, for they were innumerable, hiding their towers, sometimes, in serried ranks behind each other, and throwing down their reflection, as you shook them, upon the grass of the tree-foot. The peculiar factor in all this lively play was the entire silence of everything concerned, as though sound was no part of their universe.

It was nearly time to go indoors and tell Carl and Hilda that this drama was at an end. Then, they must pack away their sketches and start off, like myself, towards some new destiny. Of the old, there were a few moments, and no more, to run. These built themselves, as the thoughts of a drowning man are said to do, into an epitome of all their actions.

Great towers rose up in every direction with their higher reaches hidden in mist. To give scale to them, the birds who nested in those airy chambers, whether rooks or jackdaws I know not, but I should prefer them to be ravens, flew in and out of the stone arcades, cawing loudly, and intent upon the comfort of the nests they

were building. It seemed nearly impossible that one should be able to climb to that height, and the thought of this seemed to open a door at the top of a winding and endless stair into a vaulted porch. Instead of this leading to anywhere, it lay open to the sky with only enough wall to hang the roof upon. I could step straight off the floor into upper or lower gulfs of air, the one alternative being as dangerous as the other; and the birds, seen so impersonally from below, now loomed big and black with threatening wings, each of them so true to character that they could be known one from the other. If I walked as near as heart and mind would allow me to the dreadful edge of this floor the birds flew in an angry chain out of the archway, seeming to be thrown by myself into the air, for they kept in a rhythmical arrangement as though balanced on strings tied to my fingers, and they came back again mechanically into the porch once I had walked back to the middle of the floor. The stone monsters who also dwelt at this altitude, leaning on a balustrade and looking down upon the town, I could only see by holding to the stone wall and peering out over the abyss; but a bat's wing, an aquiline nose and thin lips, a horny hand with a head propped against it, or a hoof, like the sylvan satyr's but thicker of ankle, could be taken in even with a quick glance. And there among them were some of this tribe of birds, indeed, the statues were marked with their droppings and it appeared as if they lived perched on the backs of the stone cattle, and moved to their pastures with them.

But the roofs of the town, each with its twist of smoke, had too accustomed a truth for the imagination to be able to draw much material out of them. It was

essential to leave this cathedral-close and travel towards some place less imprisoned in perpetual Sunday quiet. Anyone who has glanced through the pages of this book will be able to guess the sort of direction that is implicit in this change of scene.

Into these lands the Corders had never travelled, and they may be thought of as having arrived at a climate where it is nearly impossible to make a drawing of a tower because of the blinding radiance of its climb. The Moslems, who hated the sound of bells as a Christian invention, are so near at hand that the shrill voices calling from the towers of their mosques can almost be heard. There is no sea, no river, and hardly a mountain-range between. So this is a land of military pride, with a more florid heraldic magnificence than is to be met with anywhere else. These bright myths are wrapped in darker shadow than the Northern eyes can find, and the scale of complexity and depth is increased portentously, so that the intricate and laboured wins a deeper degree of admiration than the more pure projections of a plainer mind. The land is nearly treeless, and that leafy, flickering shade is inappropriate to bare hills and dun fields. The Northern variety of this architecture, working for midday, the zenith and climax of light, is here exchanged for a scheme of things taking that hour as an accepted rest, when no one is abroad out of the shade of his house or wall. Instead, the early part of the morning was considered, with its corresponding decline down the opposite slope of the heavens, and, as well as this, buildings were given the emphatic relief that looks best by starlight. But, also, a winter as long and stark as any in the North had to be endured, and those old enemies of the stone, wind and rain, had to be

allowed their wear and destruction of all that the hands accomplished. The snow might drift its goose feathers into a crushing weight of softness, breaking down the vaults it collected upon, and vertical slides where it might roll down and drop long before it assumed a dangerous bulk, were designed and prepared for this purpose.

It was almost a cruelty to the Corders to construct their enthusiasm in this fresh environment, and to think of their happy assurance in this perfection of which they had dreamed. Its profuse and copious detail would be the delight of their eyes, and the Moorish or Manoeline perversion of the style they loved would afford them endless, half-shocked pleasures. But then, its uselessness, which would never dawn on them, obsessed me, and I could no longer envy a satisfaction which was so unprofitable, leading into so complete a bankruptcy of invention that they were for ever content with the imaginings of other minds, and had no desire to create of their own accord. This view of them soured and saddened any ambition I held for them, and made me feel that whatever happened they should not be allowed into this paradise. Their presence in it would only turn it into a mild, but eternal, hell; of that sort dwelt in by Tantalus and Sisyphus, for ever working at some useless thing which could never cease its torments. The sketches of the Corders were but a means to an end. Its finality was never reached by them, and was forgotten, ignored even, in the endless reaches of time devoured in its most initial stages.

At all costs they must be prevented, but this was the last moment that I should ever walk here under the apple-boughs, and until the clock struck its twelve dead

hours, and this was due in a breath or two of time, I found it impossible to leave the starlight and the little secrecies of its action upon leaf and branch, that made a richer and more enchanting field for the imagination to work upon than could ever be found in the red embers of a domestic fire. Too often coals are simply bloated masks, with not even a neck to support their hideous bulk; whereas, in this alternate world, these little things, changing before the eyes, become the long moonlight upon a summer land, a cluster of shining lakes, a rippled sea, and there is space beyond these diminutive boundaries for all the beauties that could exist in an enlargement of these principles into the detail proper to their suggestion.

But no time was left for this process to get to work. Like booming, vibrant thunder the bell began, and its echoes were just allowed their death before once again that doom was proclaimed. Its monotonous terror drove all other things out of mind. The appointed measures of that noise and silence built an authentic truth behind the artifice by which it was accomplished. Something real and actual depended upon this measurement by bells, and while their note distinctly sent the past further back into the distance, there was no denying that it, also, brought the past right up to the breath dying on one's lips. Stroke upon stroke had rung out, so that one might think the bells had exceeded their duty, but, at last, the shuddering echo was left unchallenged and this new division of time, for which I was waiting, began in solemn and earnest silence. So I went at once into the house, and climbed the stair.

They were busy packing, and the floor of the room was littered with paper. Apparently the sketches were left

till last, because their boxes were shut and strapped, but the portfolios were being interleaved with sheets of paper, and the corners of each sketch were carefully guarded so that they should not be turned down and spoilt. They expected me, and did not look round at once when I came in.

S. S.: Well! I'm off to-morrow morning, like you are, but we don't travel the same way, I'm afraid.

H. C.: No. We shall have left before you're called. We must be in time to catch the midday boat, you see.

S. S.: Have you finished everything you wanted to do?

C. C.: Yes! More, or less. And you?

S. S.: This very moment is the finishing touch to what I have been working on for a couple of years, and more. Once I've said "good-night" to you, the whole thing is ended.

C. C.: What happens after this?

S. S.: First of all a little rest, I hope, but that won't be for long. Some other project will begin worrying me, soon.

H. C.: How unlucky you are not to have a subject which can last you for ever, like Carl and I have! We can go on with ours, every summer; and if we could travel all the year it would last us all that time, too. Sometimes there seems so much to do that I feel overwhelmed with it.

S. S.: I suppose you neither of you ever feel, like I do, that you can't go inside a church again! That is only when I've been seeing ten or a dozen of them a day; and, then, the moment I am back in England I find myself longing for the smell of incense and the sight of a tomb; if one is not content in the present—and who

could be, I should like to know ?—then the past becomes a drug that one cannot be without for long. But this particular past that you both love is now, just to-day perhaps, almost unendurable to me. I feel I can't stand it one moment longer. My memories of it are too painful.

H. C.: You are disillusioned.

S. S.: Not in the slightest. That is the very last thing I am. But what on earth has been the use of it all ? And another thing which annoys me is that, at the same time, I should find myself in agreement with you both about the dirty, drab gutter we are living in ourselves. As for some of the horrors of the present, no wonder the "bus-conductors" call out "Holloway Gaol" when they stop in front of the Grosvenor House Flats. Perhaps we had better let the "bus-men" design something, themselves !

C. C.: I entirely agree with you.

S. S.: Yes ! I thought you would, and that is what is so irritating ! But it is nearly quarter-past, and I must be going to bed.

H. C.: We can't have been talking for a quarter of an hour, surely ? It had just struck midnight when you came in.

S. S.: That is so, but this has taken a quarter of an hour in writing, and that is the limit I set myself. Ah ! well ! I suppose we shall meet again one day ! Perhaps in another fifteen years' time I shall find you at work somewhere. I shall come round a corner and there you will both be, pencil in hand, head in air. But there'll be a difference somewhere ! Your hair will be white, Hilda, and Carl will have not so much grown older as swollen two or three sizes bigger than he is now.

H. C.: Don't, don't !

S. S.: You expect to be just the same, do you ?

C. C.: Remember, please, that half our lives were wasted, and we were saved when it was too late. You mustn't taunt us! Give us back what we lost; why are all the scales weighted against us ? Do you grudge us the little money we were left, and the few pleasures we've waited for so long ?

S. S.: I deny you nothing since I shall never see you again.

H. C.: How can you be certain of that ?

S. S.: Because I make it a rule never to go back on experience. Once I have been happy anywhere I never want to return again. For that reason if you took a leaf from my book and went sketching into the places I knew when I was twenty-one, or twenty-two, you would never find me there. Nor is it very likely that we should ever meet in a place equally unfamiliar to all three of us. You haven't the initiative for that. Think how everything has changed, even in the few years since I last saw you! The streets in little places like this were full of subjects for you, but there is all the difference in the world when they are declared national property and become a kind of museum exhibit. Already, to take Notre Dame, for example, it is no longer the culmination of a whole lot of old houses and narrow streets, but it stands absolutely at contradiction with its surroundings. It is simply an old heathen temple, only that word "heathen" destroys my meaning because you know it was a Christian church. Still, there's no denying it was the resort of idolaters; and, except for some familiar things that the eyes can interpret, it might be the work of Hindus, or of any of the true races of temple-builders. It is a whole millennium away from us. What profit

can you find in its worn stones? Can't you try to live altogether in your own orbit without having a picturesque background that you can dip into whenever you feel weak? And I suggest that, if there must be one, it had better take the more dematerialized forms of music and poetry, where you can't hurt yourself wandering about, and which, by their very unsubstantial nature, if they exist at all, are likely to do so in a more inspired air. They are made of nothing, like a magical omelette made without eggs. They won't waste so much of your time. But this change of plan comes too late in your case; I can't expect you to alter at your age!

C. C.: This must be good-bye, then!

H. C.: Stay a moment longer!

S. S.: No, it is too late. The new quarter has already struck.

And I climbed up another flight of stairs into my room.

This was the last I saw of them. A few moments later I stood in the window for a last look at the trees, and just then a light on the floor below was put out. It was from one of their rooms, and there was a little sound of sudden darkness when this happened as if something heavy had been dropped. There was not a whisper, not a sigh to be heard. Probably as we all three lay trying to sleep we thought over the same projects; but my mind was already made up, and at any rate I had reached a decision. Therefore I slept soundly and had no dreams.

NOTES

1. The Church of St. Simeon the Stylite is some eight hours' ride from Aleppo. It is called Kal'at Sim'ân, and was built in the fifth century on the establishment, in this place, of a convent of the order of Stylites, or "pillar-hermits." St. Simeon, the founder of the Order, and the son of a peasant, was born in 391 and died in 459. He began at an early age to practise the strangest and most stringent austerities. In 422 he ascended a column of moderate height, upon which he spent seven years; after which he established himself on the top of a column 38 feet high, where he passed most of the remaining thirty years of his existence. The highest altitude that he ever reached was one of sixty feet, but this was inconvenient because out of earshot. A railing ran round the capital of his pillar, and a ladder enabled his disciples to take him the necessaries of life. Exposed here to all the inclemency of the weather, he delivered lectures on the Holy Scriptures from his lofty station, answered questions and attracted thousands of hearers and pupils.

The ruins of this church and monastery occupy the whole of a plateau lying among desolate mountains. The plan of the church answers so well to the description given by Procopius of the church of the Apostles erected by Constantine in his new capital, and intended for his burial place, that it would appear to be a copy of that older building. It consists of four great arms, built in the shape of a Greek cross, and each containing two rows of six columns. Where these four arms meet a great octagonal space is formed. In the centre of this there still lies the pedestal of a huge column, probably that upon which St. Simeon passed three decades of his life. But, in the great court, behind the east wing of the church, there is a large mass of rock,

approached by steps, and this may equally well be the rock on which his pillar stood. Traces of the monastery, less well preserved than those of the church, still remain; and to the south of this there is another church of the same style, the interior of which is occupied by several Arab families. Apart from the romantic interest of these relics of the Stylite, the Church of St. Simeon is an architectural masterpiece of a very high order, and in all that region of the world there are only two things that can compare with it, the temples of Petra and of Baalbek. (Cf. "Les Stylites," by H. Delahaye the Bollandist, Paris, 1895.)

2. With regard to this manuscript the name of a celebrated primitive painter must be mentioned. Simon Marmion of Amiens, 1425–1480, is recorded as at work in his native city in the years 1449–1458. In 1454 he was called with thirty-four other painters from Bruges, Audenarde, Ghent, Tournai, and Arras, to Lille, in order to work upon the decorations for the celebrated Banquet du Faisan. In 1458 he settled at Valenciennes, where he stayed till his death, painting pictures, also, for Cambrai and Tournai. One of his best works is "The Legend of St. Vincent," in twelve sections, arrived by some strange chance at the church of S. Pietro Martire at Naples. He was, as well, a celebrated miniaturist, and among other works of this kind the frontispiece to this volume has been attributed to his hand. This manuscript (Huth XIII, Add. MS. 38126) is one of the best extant specimens of Flemish illumination. It contains twenty-four full page and seventy-four smaller miniatures, with full, or partial, borders of flowers and insects upon every page.

3. Maria Sibylla Merian, the daughter of Matthaeus Merian the engraver, and sister to the well-known painter of the same name, was born at Frankfort in 1647. She became the pupil of Abraham Mignon, and devoted herself entirely to painting reptiles, flowers and insects. She finished an astonishing number of these in water-colours upon vellum. In 1679 and 1683 were published the two parts of her book upon European insects, but, later in life, she was not content with this vast field for observation but undertook, in 1698, a voyage to the Dutch colony of Surinam in South America. Here she stayed for two

years, discovering numerous flowers and animals unknown to the learned world, and was the first person to study the transformation of the chrysalis, for which reason she has a scientific renown as well as her fame as a painter. Her daughter, Dorothea Henrietta Graff, accompanied her to Surinam, helped her with her designs, married a rich Dutch merchant of the colony, and assisted her mother on their return to Europe with the publication of two great volumes of engravings. These were hand-coloured by the two of them. M. S. Merian died in 1717, and when she was dead her daughter collected and published a third volume of fifty engravings from her designs. (Cf. Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters," 1810.)

4. Tulips were introduced into Holland from Turkey by Clusius in 1575. The speculation in bulbs reached its height in 1637. For the Semper Augustus 10,000 florins was given; for the Admiral Liefkens 4,500; for the Viceroy 4,500; while one Dutch town is said to have cleared ten million florins in one year by the sale of bulbs, and a private investor sixty-eight thousand florins in a few weeks. The government eventually suppressed this form of gambling, and prices fell so rapidly that many people were ruined. A century later there was a similar craze for hyacinths. (Cf. "The Netherlands Display'd," by Marjorie Bowen, 1926, p. 210.)

5. The poetess Christine de Pisan, 1364–1430, was born at Venice. Her father was the Italian astrologer to Charles V of France. She married Etienne du Castel, notary to Charles V, and on his death, in 1389, being left with three children, she took to writing in order to gain a living. Her most celebrated works are the "Cité des Dames" and the "Livre des Trois Vertus," two books which contain many portraits of her contemporaries. She composed a poem in honour of Joan of Arc in 1429. She adopted France for her native country and lived there all her life, in spite of invitations from Henry IV of England, and Galeazzo Visconti, the Tyrant of Milan.

The manuscript in question (Harleian MS. 4431) is one of the most beautiful manuscripts in the British Museum Library. The frontispiece, here reproduced, shows the poet presenting her

book to the wife of Charles V, Elizabeth, daughter of Stephen II of Bavaria, whose name was Gallicized into Isabeau. The bed in this frontispiece is bright red in colour, and the walls are hung with blue brocade, with chequers, or golden fleurs-de-lys. Throughout the manuscript there is an astonishing clearness of colour, more especially when blue is used, and the whole manuscript provides in its miniatures the most interesting evidence as to the daily life and surroundings of that time.

6. Although Batavia was founded in 1618 the Dutch did not obtain full possession of Java till they dissolved the important Moslem Sultanate of Mataram in 1755. Out of its ruins they formed the two Sultanates of Djojka and Solo. The capital of the first of these, Djojkacarta, has a population of 60,000, and a royal walled town, or kraton, lived in by 15,000 soldiers, eunuchs, wives, and royal attendants. In this enclosure is the "Watercasteel," a palace built in the eighteenth century by European architects on an artificial island, with statues, fountains, pavilions, and underground galleries. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 1867. Soeracarta, the capital of Solo, has 120,000 inhabitants, and a kraton lived in by 10,000 persons. Near to it is the kraton of the Mangkoe-Negoro, or second king, who is powerless and has no function. These two States are famous for their marionette-plays, and for the live dramas in which the princes and princesses of the Sultan's family take the part of marionettes.

In Cambodia, on the other hand, the authentic bayadères from the sculptures of Angkor are still to be seen. This is at Phnom-Penh, the capital of the kingdom. In the palace here, the sacred sword of the State, a blade damascened with gold, is still preserved, and this has been the Royal insignia ever since the time of the Khmer emperors who built Angkor. The only other relic of that civilization is the corps of choreutes, or ballet-dancers, belonging to the king. This is a part of the ancient Brahminic liturgy, and the dances are given in honour of the god Siva, or to please the gods of Indra, i.e., paradise. The gods, who are personified in the king, are thus satisfied in his personal pleasures. This dancing is said to be of the most exquisite beauty, in no way lessened by the static graces of the bayadères. The

stables of the sacred white elephant, also part of the palace, are another indication of the curious nature of this sacred establishment.

7. The Cartuja de Miraflores was founded by Juan II and rebuilt in the years after 1454 by Hans and Simon of Cologne. D. Juan II and his wife Isabella of Portugal are buried here in tombs erected for them by their daughter, Isabella the Catholic. Externally, the chapel, as pointed out by Street in his "Gothic Architecture in Spain," has a strong resemblance in scale and in plan to Eton College Chapel. The cloister, refectory, and library are not shown, but evidently they do not contain much of interest. The Cartuja is now occupied by about thirty French monks, driven out of their country by the laws of 1903. The present prior is an Englishman. (Cf. Francisco Tarin y Juaneda, "La Real Cartuja de Miraflores," Libreria Rodriguez, Burgos, 1927.) The work of Gil de Siloe in this monastery, the royal tombs, that is to say, and the retablo of the altar, are the finest existing works of the last part of the fifteenth century, exactly contemporary with, but how different to, the temple of the Malatesta at Rimini!

8. The Temple of the Malatesta was begun, under the direction of Alberti, in 1447. The tomb of Sigismondo, built while he was still living, in 1468, was made by Bernardo Ciuffagni. This is immediately to the right on entering the church. The first chapel on the right, dedicated to St. Sigismund, King of Hungary, was designed by Francesco Laurana, or, according to Vasari, by Simone, the brother of Donatello. The arch of the chapel rests on pilasters supported by elephants, two on each side. The first chapel on the left is the most beautiful of all. It has the same two pillars supported upon four elephants, by Simone. The chapel is covered with beautiful sculpture, and contains the tomb in which Sigismondo wished that the bones of his ancestors and descendants might repose. This has two bas-reliefs: Pallas Athene surrounded by heroes of the Malatesta family, and Sigismondo drawn on a chariot by four horses, preceded by prisoners, under a triumphal arch. This tomb, and the whole chapel, are attributed by Vasari to Luca della Robbia

Another chapel contains the tomb of Isotta, supported on two elephants. The arch of yet another contains eighteen bas-reliefs in Greek marble of the Liberal Arts; while the chapel next to this has an archway, the two pillars of which, divided each into nine sections, show the signs of the zodiac and of the planets on an azure ground. In these two chapels the pillars are supported by great baskets of white marble on red bases, and embellished with cupids and garlands. Above every basket are bronze wreaths of grapes, apples and leaves, with lizards, frogs, and butterflies among them. These are by Lorenzo Ghiberti, or by Matteo de Pasti. Lastly, the inside wall of the locked reliquary room has a fresco, by Piero della Francesca, of Sigismondo Malatesta kneeling before St. Sigismund, King of Hungary. Two greyhounds are by his side, and the fortress he had but lately built is shown in the background.

As to the tombs built into the arches on the outside of the church, the first four of them contain the ashes of Basinio Parmense, author of various Latin poems; of Giusto de Conti, a Roman, and the writer of a ballad "La Bella Mano," in honour of Isotta; of Roberto Valturi of Rimini, author of a book, "De re militari," and counsellor to Sigismondo; and, lastly, of the famous Gemistio, a Byzantine philosopher whose bones were carried away from the Morea, in 1465, by Sigismondo when he was leading the Venetian armies against the Turks. (Cf. Rimini in the series "L'Italia Monumentale," Milan, Bonomi, 1915.)

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